Artists and the art school: experiences and perspectives of fine art education & professional pedagogies in London art schools, 1986-2016

Artists and The Art School:

Experiences and Perspectives of Fine Art Education and Professional Pedagogies in London Art Schools, 1986-2016

SARAH SCARSBROOK

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Signed Declaration:

Sarah Scarsbrook

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own and that it is the result of original research.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates visual artists' experiences and views of their undergraduate fine art education, focussing on encounters of professional development in London art schools between 1986-2016. It foregrounds artists' voices, analysing their motivations and justifications for attending, how they participated in professional pedagogies, what was accepted, rejected, and incorporated into professional practices, and the effects of art schooling since graduating. The study presents a unique insight into understanding artists' art schooled identities, myths, freedoms, and professionalisation.

I developed an approach that combines social scientific methods of Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM), with arts-based/informed methods, including drawing, making, speaking, filming, editing, and performing, to analyse interviews with twelve artists, covering graduate exit points in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s. This approach embeds reflexivity and performativity, bringing new methods to GTM, expanding GTM's set of recommended methods to include my creative interpretation. This resulted in a rigorous and reflexive exploration of what artists said of their art schooling, fracturing and questioning this to develop the themes presented in this study.

The findings reveal art schooling causes deep and lasting emotionally embedded tensions, conflicts, and contradictions in the artists' identities, myths, freedoms, and professionalisation. This study furthers understanding of how artists' identities are implicated during art schooling, how they form through art schooled tensions, and the lasting effects of these tensions on artists' identities. The art school is positioned as important to artists' development, particularly in its perpetuation of myths around luck, innate talent, artists' specialness, and certain freedoms. Structureless pedagogies are shown to heighten the circulation of artistic myths, generating misconceptions of freedoms. Both during and after art schooling this mythification is revealed to conspire ongoing affective labour, realised through efforts to self-regulate through de/re-mythification. This supports negotiations of post-pedagogised identities, which fold both resistance and acceptance of art schooled experiences into them. Myth is perpetuated as part of relative freedoms in ongoing practices towards professional identities.

To all of those who step into ‘The Cave’...

Someone standing at the mouth had
the idea to enter. To go further
than light or language could
go.

...*Keep going*, the idea said.

...*Go* ...

(Tran, 2019, original emphasis)

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Undertaking and completing this project, which I began in 2013, has been an exciting, challenging, and transformative experience. It has not been a solo endeavour, and my friends and family have been by my side. Being largely self-sponsored, I balanced working and studying part-time for the first five years. In October 2017, to create the space I needed to focus, I took the decision to become 'rent free', which necessitated giving up my job of eight years, and my home of twelve, both based in London, becoming income free (/jobless) and simultaneously itinerant (/homeless) to pursue this goal. The consistent precarity of both situations has been demanding, humbling, and also somewhat fortuitous. I am indebted to the generosity of others I tentatively sought, having been offered places to stay that were conducive to study, while maintaining mental and physical wellbeing. I developed approaches to living in others' homes, navigating relationships, finding the exchange (cat/dog/house-sitting have worked well), meeting expectations, communicating, and not outstaying my welcome. I have been exceptionally appreciative, humbled by, and grateful for my friends and family. Though I have not had economic capital, my social capital has afforded great fortunes in every sense of the word; resources, chances, abundance, and circumstance. Without the people who have supported me by generously hosting me, for the support through listening and talking, hugs and giving me space, through laughter, dancing, proud moments, and the tears of joy and despair, this thesis would not exist. Just like themes I tease out in my research this has not been achieved alone, but is a plural co-created feat. The list of thanks is long.

First of all, I thank my supervisors Dr Simone Wesner and Dr Sophie Hope, for their unwavering excellence, resolute criticality, and intellectual and moral support. For their belief in me and my project, for pushing me to my limits and helping me grow and fledge into the world of academia. Their commitment to me, and my work as a researcher has been continuous, invaluable, and vital, helping me develop on personal and intellectual levels through this process. My gratitude extends to the artists who participated in this research, for giving their voices to the project, who had the courage and desire to share, without which it would have not been possible. I also thank Anthony Shepherd, MPhil/PhD Programme Administrator at Birkbeck, for being ever available and going above and beyond to provide tremendous help and support.

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I'm looking forward to giving back.

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LIST of ABBREVIATIONS

AMM	Analytic Memoing & Materialising
ASA	Art School Absorptions
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BFA	Bachelor of Fine Arts
CCI	Cultural & Creative Industries
CSM	Central Saint Martins (School of Art)
GTM	Grounded Theory Methodology
HAE	Higher Arts Education
HE	Higher Education
IAE	International Art English (Rule & Levine, 2012)
MA	Master of Arts
NACAE	National Advisory Council on Art Education
NPM	New Public Managerialism
POI	Person-Object Conception of Interest (Krapp, 2002)
QDC	Qualitative Data Coding
RCA	Royal College of Art
SRM	Scarsbrook Rolling Method
UAL	University of the Arts London
YBA	Young British Artists

Chapter 1
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1
Overview

> It was probably the three best years in my life…I knew I'd have these three years to make work and experiment and play, and I kind of knew that I wouldn't necessarily have that again…
>
> (Scarsbrook, 2015)

Attending art school meant having and dedicating time to making art. It was creative immersion, exciting, and experimental. Of course, I only fully understood the fleetingness and opportunity in this afterwards, in the 'real world', as it was often called by tutors, where things would be different to underlying hopes and expectations. My experience of art schooling, alongside my interest and ongoing inspiration for art practice and research in understanding the stories, careers, and lives of artists, is where this study begins. The central question underpinning this research is; What are artists' experiences and views of their undergraduate fine art education and encounters of professional development in London art schools? This inquiry broadens out to consider, what are the effects of fine art education and professional pedagogies on artists' practices, professions, and identities? How do art schools influence artists' in these areas? And, what lasting position does this education have in artists' lives? In this chapter I outline my research question, enquiry, and objectives, as well as the parameters of this study. I position my rationale and motivation, define key terms I use throughout, and present the thesis structure and content of the following chapters.

Since studying fine art, the art school's influence has often occupied my thoughts, whether considering its position in mine and other artists' careers, its effects on our identities, or of feeling enabled, able, and/or unable to call ourselves artists in varying situations. Initial ideas for this study drew on personal reflections, as well as from conversations with friends and colleagues about their art schooling, and particularly our

common encounters with professional development experienced on fine art BAs[1] in London art schools. From these contemplations and exchanges, the phenomenon of professional development appeared to be increasingly prevalent, growing in intensity and influence, as did apparent repudiation and indignation of the pedagogies instilling this. I began considering the occurrence of professional development as a pedagogical turn, as well as, most predominantly, wanting to hear from artists about their experiences and perspectives of art schooling under these professional pedagogies.

In existing discourse on art schooling, common questions are raised around what kinds of skills artists should be taught, or not, during their fine art education (Birnbaum, 2009; Ferguson, 2009; Bauer, 2009; Allen & Rowles, 2016; Davis & Tilley, 2016; Newall, 2019). Significantly, recent debates highlight the necessity of entrepreneurial skilling (Thom, 2017; Frenette, 2017) and emphasise the (in)effectiveness of higher arts education (HAE) in preparing students for market-oriented and object-centred art careers in line with employability policy and neoliberal agendas. Other studies focus on the prominence of *talent* (Menger, 2014; Banks, 2017), and question equality of access and homophily in student recruitment onto arts study programs based on this measure. Elsewhere, specific aspects of art and design education, such as its unique history, pedagogy, teaching methods, and ways of learning (Llewellyn, 2015; Crippa, 2015; Orr & Shreeve, 2018; Newall, 2019) are foregrounded, notably by those working in curriculum development as educators, or as curators from the wider art establishment, such as major museums and galleries.

This research is situated among these studies, and though producing crossover knowledge, in this study I ask different questions in the first instance, focussing exclusively on fine art courses rather than art and design more broadly. I come from both emic and etic[2] positions; having studied fine art myself, but currently looking in from outside of the art school educational institution. I specifically engage with those who have encountered art schooling, foregrounding close examination of visual artists' experiences of their fine art education, in their own words. This study takes a distinctive

[1] BA, or *Batchelor of Arts*, is awarded in the UK for undergraduate degrees. In higher education it follows A-Levels, or Diploma courses, and precedes MA (*Master of Arts*) postgraduate courses.
[2] These terms signify both my 'insider' and 'outsider' position within the research. Definitions outline an '"etic viewpoint studies behavior as from outside of a particular system," while the "emic viewpoint results from studying behavior as from inside the system"' (Pike, 1967 cited in Olive, 2014:3).

approach through Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) with arts practice, combining social scientific methods of GTM with drawing, making, filming, editing, and performing to make meaning. Through this approach I bring to the surface some of what is already known, yet question what has been discussed before, not taking this for granted but finding new ones and questioning existing knowledge through a deeply interwoven and recursive meaning making process. My findings advance knowledge that fine art education in the UK causes ongoing emotionally embedded tensions, conflicts, and contradictions in the personal and professional lives and careers of those who have attended. Through my research I develop a clear understanding of the ways artists' identities, mythologies, and freedoms are entangled with the professional pedagogies experienced at art school and how these are influenced through this education as part of ongoing professionalisation. This is anticipated to be relevant and useful towards effective artist, cultural, and educational policy development. My overarching research question, enquiry and objectives that have led me to these findings are detailed next.

1.2
Research Question(s), Enquiry, & Objectives

As introduced above, the central research question underlying this study is; What are artists' experiences and views of their undergraduate fine art education and encounters of professional development in London art schools? This question was developed to explore how this time in an artists' life is viewed, incorporated, and also challenged by them, as well as to understand more about its lasting effects after art school. I asked twelve graduates from different London art schools and graduation year groups, across the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, to tell me about their experiences of before, during, and after their undergraduate fine art education. My central enquiries were based in finding out; Why did they attend art school? What did they take from it? What, if at all, were their experiences of professional development? And, what has it been like for them since leaving?

My study is interpretive and not hypothesis-led, meaning where I discuss my objectives and enquiries here, these were, at times, developed in tandem with the research taking place, as per theoretical sampling in GTM, details of which are discussed in chapter three. From the outset, however, the main aims I wanted to achieve through this study

centred on taking a creative approach, provisioning artists' voices and relating what they say about their art schooling to relevant policy development, and contributing to knowledge and understanding in these areas. Though, to caveat, I did not begin, nor end my study with an instrumental plan. The central objectives were to:

- Use an interpretive methodological approach which could be developed through arts-based/informed[3] methods aligned to my arts practice.
- Listen broadly and deeply to what artists say about their experiences of fine art education, foregrounding new knowledge about their lives and contributing to the growing body of research that centralises artists' voices in debates (see Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Louden, 2013, 2017; Gerber, 2017; Wesner, 2018).
- Offer artists a platform to speak, supporting their voices and increasing the chances that they are heard, so that their/our[4] views and opinions can be foregrounded in the development of more relevant arts and educational policymaking; so that they/we, as the progenitors of their/our policies, are heard as policymakers.
- Interpret what the artists' discussed, conveying this as accurately and sensitively as possible in this text, so that what they say is not taken for granted and adds new understanding about this critical time in artists' development and its lasting effects.

Through initial scoping of my topic, and the development of specific enquiry through the GTM approach, the parameters of the study were focussed and address the following key investigations:

- Artists' motivations and justifications for attending art school relating to transitioning from artist-student[5] to 'professional' artist.
- Artists' encounters with professional pedagogies and furthering professionalisation in London art schools, and how these have been incorporated into practice/careers and/or rejected by the artists investigated.

[3] This term is defined in chapter three.
[4] I refer to specific language use later in section 1.4, however, in brief, I use 'they/we', 'them/us', 'their/our', to highlight the collective voices (*their* voices) of the artists I interviewed are those I listened to, foreground, and interpret in this study, while acknowledging that the discussions and outcomes implicate and affect me too as an artist, as well as others.
[5] I borrow the term 'artist-student' from Buckley and Conomos (2009:6), who use this when referring to 'artist-teachers' and 'artist-students' in highlighting that those in art schools, whether educators or students, are/see themselves as artists. I discuss this further in section 1.4.

- The effects of art school education on artists' personal and professional lives afterwards.

Through these, five core categories[6] are developed in the areas of:

- The relationship between artistic identification and art schooling, particularly around pedagogised and professional(ised) identities.
- The position and influence of artistic myth in higher arts education, specifically related to artistic and professional identities and practices.
- The shifting importance and form(s) of artistic freedoms and autonomy, and how art schooling effects this, also related to myth and identity.
- The interconnection between identities, myths, and freedoms with professionalisation that is constructed through elements of all of these.
- The correlation between art schooling and lasting emotionally embedded tensions, conflicts, and contradictions for artists before, during, and after attending, affecting the preceding categories.

These enquiries, themes, and categories are the major threads that, in combination, are developed and analysed throughout the study, holding the thesis together around the central question. Next, I discuss my rationale for developing this study, considering why it is so pertinent now, elaborating on why it is personally important and relevant, and why I focus on London and the timeframe of 1986-2016.

1.3
Rationale & Motivation

1.3.1 Why this Study & Why Now?

Art schools in the UK are understood to be in the midst of one of the most significant pedagogical moments to dominate since the Middle Ages (Houghton, 2016). The prevailing pedagogy has been termed the *Professional Curriculum* (ibid.:115) and is 'tied tightly to a belief that education should be instrumental and be aligned to enabling students on leaving to earn a living and contribute to a nation's economy', and that

[6] This GTM term denotes main findings. My use of it and how I found these are defined in chapter three.

'everything becomes subservient to this main goal of professional preparation' (ibid.). UK HAE gradually embedded professional development into arts pedagogy through the incorporating of around 90% of the UK's independent art schools into universities (Beck & Cornford, 2012). A move which began in the 1960s after the *First Coldstream Report* (Coldstream, HMSO, 1960) and was consolidated in the 1990s under the *Further and Higher Education Act* (Great Britain, DfE, 1992) (see Banks, 2007; Buckley & Conomos, 2009; Llewellyn, 2015; Houghton, 2016). These changes meant UK art schools came under the same centralised governing commands that stipulate employability and enterprise agendas and targets (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). They also dictate how much students should pay for their art education, and place art schools and fine art under the same regulations and marketised evaluation systems as other courses within universities (see Hill et al. 2013). These moves have deepened art schooling's instrumental alignment with the aims of public policy related to the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs)[7] (McRobbie, 2011a; Banks & Oakley, 2015), following a historical pattern of art and design education being teleological to government aims, a theme, along with others here, that I detail further in the next chapter when situating this research.

Of particular relevance to this study is art school's position as a place of learning, trialling, honing, and negotiating different identities (see Becker, 1982; Bain, 2005; Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Orr & Shreeve, 2018). How artists' navigate those identifications, as well as how they continue with their arts practice post art school has for some time intrigued, puzzled, encouraged, and motivated me. As I noted at the beginning, this is a deeply personal project, where my life experiences crossover significantly with the participants in this study. Indeed, mine is interwoven with theirs much more than I realised when I began. We share experiences of innate beliefs and imparted storylines about creative talent from a young age, we are both appreciative

[7] Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) is a UK cultural policy term devised by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) to define 'those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (DCMS, 2001, cited in Great Britain, DCMS 2017). Industries included under CCIs are: 'Advertising and Marketing; Architecture; Crafts; Design (product, graphic and fashion design); Film, TV, video, radio and photography; IT, software and computer services (including video games); Museums, galleries and libraries; Music, performing and visual arts; and Publishing' (Great Britain, DCMS, 2017). This group of occupations, and specifically the inclusion of the visual arts, has been critiqued under relativizing measurement and indication of performance among the wider CCIs (see Campbell P. et al., 2018).

and disappointed to varying extents with aspects of our art schooling, we experience the seemingly constant precarity[8] of balancing life, work, and practice, and deal with the emotional aftermath and the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions influenced by our art schooling. Understanding my story and the stories of other art schooled artists, who consider themselves artists (or not), before, during, or after their education, and who continue to practice around work and other commitments, is a key reason for my carrying out this study into this significant time in artists' lives.

As well as personal curiosity, preliminary scoping of the topic also became key to my ongoing motivation to study this subject. After my initial ideas informing the research enquiry, I focussed the study through exploring extant theory on educational and cultural policy, cultural work and professional creative identities (including Beck, 2003; Banks, 2007; Cross, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Beck & Cornford, 2012; Paquette, 2012; Taylor & Littleton, 2012; McRobbie, 2002, 2011a, 2016). It appeared from this literature that being, and/or becoming, a professional artist through art schooling resonated as a central component in artists' lives. This was being influenced by the changes in fine art pedagogies that were embedding professionalism further, and appeared especially prevalent in London art schools. Upon noting this, I researched primary source materials from these art schools, including their prospectuses and course outlines, and noticed an explicit rhetoric developing around professionalism through the promotion of professional practice as core curricula activity. These ideas and the influence that 'becoming professional' might have on artists' motivations, careers, and lives sparked my interest to find out more.

Since I began this research in 2013, more studies have been conducted on professional artist identities, in cultural work, and fine art education (including Lindstrom, 2015; Banks & Oakley, 2015; Houghton, 2016; McRobbie, 2016; Banks, 2017; Gerber, 2017; Orr & Shreeve, 2018; Wesner, 2018; and Newall, 2019). As well, various advisory reports aimed at policy development have also been published (Slater et al. 2013; DHA, 2014; Gordon-Nesbitt, 2015; Warwick Commission, 2015; and Allen & Rowles, 2016).

[8] Precarity has continued for me through my endeavours to complete this work as a self-sponsored PhD candidate. As noted in my *Acknowledgments*, I ceased living and working in London to become a nomadic cat/dog/house/farm-sitting itinerant artist/researcher/writer. I have become precarious in a way that resonates deeply with the participating artists' lives, continuing the precarity I experienced as an artist living and working in London.

All of these add weight to the challenge of identifying and critiquing issues around artists' higher education, professionalisation, and lives, also creating more understanding and knowledge available in this area. The rich contribution of these reports and critiques are paramount in highlighting and possibly improving situations for artists, helping to shape the policies being foregrounded through their practices and participating in studies like these. In addition, and contrary to some who have considered that 'art school histories should not place excessive reliance on the artist interview and oral history' (Llewellyn, 2015:153) because of propensities for partiality (something I acknowledge as inevitable in research in chapter three), I see there is a critical need for research that comes directly from artists. It creates vital space for artists' voices to be listened to, and underlies more relevant policymaking towards improving their situations. Indeed, alongside an emerging practice among cultural policy researchers (Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Orr et al., 2014; Louden, 2013, 2017; Gerber, 2017; and Wesner, 2018) that favours listening to artists, I contribute to a growing body of knowledge that provides a deeper understanding of artists' experiences and needs through this approach. Through listening to artists' experiences, this study offers key insights into art school histories too. Research that listens deeply and carefully to what artists have to say, not only increases understanding of art school histories, but produces situations where artists can have a say in shaping appropriate policies that affect them and their futures. Next, I outline the boundaries of this study.

1.3.2 Why this Course, Location, & Timeframe?

I developed the parameters of my research to focus on undergraduate study of fine art, from London art schools in particular, and a specific timeframe spanning thirty years, from 1986 to 2016. In this section I outline the development of and reasons for these boundaries.

1.3.2.1 Why Undergraduate Study of Fine Art?

I wanted to speak to those who had graduated from the three-year professional degree (see Bain, 2005) in higher art education to gain a Batchelor of Arts (BA). The BA represents the first opportunity for a person to study fine art and to gain a professional degree (ibid.) in this subject. As such it is the first instance they would experience professional(ising) pedagogies of this kind, and after which they might be considered professional artists by others, and perhaps themselves. Though, the BA's significance

has changed over time, and what once might have been sufficient to consider oneself a professional on completion is not necessarily so today (see Buckley & Conomos, 2009; Daichendt, 2012). Now it could take between six and nine years (minimum) to complete all available fine art education in the UK. This comprises of a one-year Foundation Course, followed by a three-year Bachelor of Arts (BA), a one or two-year Master of Arts (MA), and potentially, a three to seven-year Doctorate (PhD). The decision was taken to interview those who had encountered the first tier of higher education, the fine art BA, highlighting a certain commitment and dedication to their education and practice. It turned out that all participants had undertaken a Foundation Course, as is the prerequisite in the UK, six also had MAs, and three either were undertaking or wanted to undertake PhDs.

1.3.2.2 Why 1986-2016?

After initial scoping exercises examining primary material from art schools, including prospectuses and course outlines, I found the promotion of 'professional practice' as a core component of the curricula first appeared in the 1985/6 *Saint Martin's School of Art*[9] prospectus (ILEA, 1985:10). I had wanted to understand this pedagogy that focusses on professional practice and personal development as core course content, and which promotes graduate career options as a goal-oriented approach to education. I subsequently found the promotion of professional practice and career opportunities were increasingly prevalent in the course literature of many more London art schools by the early 2000s. The prospectus, that is a key marketing tool in the recruitment for art schools and the universities of which they are a part (Bradley, 2018), as part of the 'heavily marketed pathway into creative work and careers' (Taylor & Luckman, 2020:4), appeared to be steadily becoming more focussed on the outcomes of the courses and on what art graduates could 'become'.

1986 emerged as a significant year in UK art school history, marking the point when 'professional practice' became an explicit component of London art school's curricula content, and which has become a tool of their marketing since. With this as the starting

[9] Three years later, in 1989, *Saint Martin's School of Art* merged with *The Central School of Art and Design*, both colleges of the *London Institute*, to become *Central Saint Martin's College of Arts and Design*. In 2004 the *London Institute* became the *University of the Arts London* (UAL) and the school became known simply as *Central Saint Martins* or CSM.

point, I wanted to interview artists who had attended art schools that had adopted professional pedagogies since then, and up to the time when I was conducting the interviews (in 2015/16). The final participant I interviewed graduated in 2016, situating the timeframe for this study as 1986-2016.

1.3.2.3 Why London?

'It had to be London' (P2:137)[10], answered one of the participants when discussing why they chose the art school they attended. For me, my study also necessitated a focus on this location. London is where professional pedagogies appeared to surface first in the UK context. The London institutions were selected to concentrate on, as they were found to be the earliest adopters and proponents of pedagogies that embedded explicit professional practice as a core aspect of learning. Finding those who had experienced these pedagogies is why London art schools were chosen as a focus.

This offered me the opportunity to critique it, however, I also recognise its conceivable London-centricity, and possible alignment with other studies that focus on London art schooling (see Massouras, 2012; Crippa 2014; Llewellyn, 2015), potentially perpetuating a narrowly centralised view, seen as instrumentally self-interested by some (Beck & Cornford, 2018). Though other art colleges and schools outside of London could have perhaps been chosen, my choice to focus on London is also somewhat unavoidable, influenced by general trends towards centralisation in the UK since the 1970s (Beck & Cornford, 2014, and Stewart, 2014, cited in Hambleton, 2017). Wider cultural policy centralised funding structures (and powers) of the arts towards London (see Stark et al., 2013), and reforms in art and design education amalgamated and institutionalised regional and independent art schools, concentrating these towards the capital (Buckley & Conomos, 2009; Stewart, 2014, cited in Hambleton, 2017). While I detail the backdrop to this research in-depth in the next chapter, to fully unpack why London art schools led the way in embedding professional pedagogies in the UK is a question that lies beyond the scope of this study, and could provide a pertinent enquiry for further research. However, it remains, if I wanted to examine artists' experiences and perspectives of professional pedagogies, I needed to look to London.

[10] This code has been developed to reference the participants, explained further in chapter three.

Additionally, although the focus of this research is centred on experiences of artists who studied fine art BAs in London, the participants represent a broader remit than this location alone. Many come from throughout the UK and studied Foundation Courses, and/or currently work as educators across a range of art educational institutes and different levels, bringing a breadth of experiences that represent a wider net than just the London art schools. Though I do not suggest it is representative of a wider study, these factors will have inevitably been drawn upon during the interviews. Next, I discuss the language the artists' brought with them and its influence and incorporation into the study.

1.4
A Note on Language: In Their Words & Mine

One of the main aims of my thesis was to foreground artists' voices, so it is important to note that I use terms and language that are directly linked to what the artists I interviewed said. I often purposely utilise or avoid words and/or phrases to respect this, considering the language employed throughout to be co-constructed. Some key words/terms I discern from the outset here, either reflect those used by the participating artists, or are ones I coin to describe certain contexts, or the artists' actions and assertions. Others are delineated when they appear throughout the thesis.

I begin with the term 'art school'; a focal point of this study, and a term I use because, though I use it in my interview questions, the participating artists prioritised this term over 'university' or 'college' to refer to the sites where they studied fine art. In the UK, *Art School* refers to the art departments, colleges, or academies, that are today commonly set within, or have become universities since they were merged under government schemes in the 1960s and later in the 1990s (Llewellyn, 2015), noted earlier. Historically, UK art schools were independent of central government, though local authority funded educational institutions that focussed on visual arts training (Beck & Cornford, 2012). I used this term in my interview questions, because when I studied fine art (2001-2004) it was commonly called art school. The artists may use this term nostalgically, to refer to this bygone time, as well to maintain art school's specialness, distinguishing it from other (university) higher education (P1:3071 & P2:876), a topic that surfaces later in the thesis when contemplating maintenances of the uniqueness of arts, artists, and the art school. When I refer to art school, I often

singularise it as 'the' art school, not to consider all art schools homogenous, but to highlight that I consider art schools to collectively represent an entity that symbolises institutional(ised) art and education more broadly, a relationship expanded upon in the following chapters.

I do not, however, refer to 'the' artist as a singular entity. This stems from a central finding that emerges in this study about the complexity of artists' multiple identities that are mutable and not static, as well as not wanting to position artists as homogenous entities, but offering a polyvocal account of their experiences. It is also a deliberate move away from myths that conceive of and perpetuate singular and narrow artist identities, such as 'the' artist-genius or 'the' starving artist for example, concepts discussed further in chapter seven. Related to this is my use of the term/prefix 'co-', that is both to foreground a philosophical belief related to my research paradigm, that artists (and others) do not operate independently of (an)other as 'autonomous beings' (see Abbing 2004; Banks, 2010). My interpretations have been constructed *with* the artists I interviewed, with their words, not necessarily with their continued conscious or physical cooperation, but in acknowledgment of their presence, participation, and effect of their words on mine. I use 'the artists' or 'they/them/their', when referring collectively to the artists, however, as footnoted earlier, I do not mean to exclude myself as an artist, but rather refer to the views, experiences, and perspectives of the twelve artists I interviewed together as 'they/them/their'. I also use 'some', 'others', and 'another' frequently and interchangeably, to stitch the artists' individual voices together to formulate collective voices in the fabric of the thesis. When I refer to the artists individually, I use 'they/them/their' as a pronoun, in part to retain pseudonymisation[11], also discouraging individualising, so the artists' stories can be heard in their plurality (see Whelan & Ryan, 2018:59). As well, this is to acknowledge that the participants did not expressly state their preferred pronoun. Through this, I intentionally distance my study from heteronormative binary distinctions of gender, especially where artists have commonly been positioned as male (see Bain, 2004, 2005). I hope to promote less predefined thinking to that which can arise once gender distinctions are made.

[11] Following the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (European Parliament and Council, 2016), pseudonymisation is used to protect the privacy of participants, discussed further in chapter three.

Additionally, when using the term ‘artist’ more broadly, I refer to visual artists, rather than actors, designers, musicians, dancers, architects etc.

I frequently hyphenate ‘artist’ with adjoining words, combining ‘artist-student’, ‘artist-teacher’, and ‘artist-graduate’ for example. As per the earlier footnote to my first use of ‘artist-student’, I borrow this in part from Buckley and Conomos (2009:6) to indicate the duality of these in the artists’ lives, and to acknowledge the artists in this study positioned their being an artist foremost, before student, graduate, or teacher. At other points I employ what appear to be analogous terms, such as ‘osmotic’, ‘reaction’, and ‘absorption’, especially in chapter five, when considering ways of learning discussed as occurring in art schools. However, these are more than simply analogous, and are either terms the artists use directly, or are metaphors that I interpret from what they say. Occasionally the artists led the theoretical analysis too, by implying, yet not entirely acknowledging a theoretical framing and understanding of a situation. For example, one used the phrase ‘ways of seeing’ (P8:2917 & 2929) perhaps referring to Berger (1972), or, another frequently discussed ‘communities of practice’ (P9:122, 2261, 2761, 3706 & 5852), which is a central idea in the work of Lave and Wenger (1991), and Wenger (1998). These concepts, among more, are interwoven into the thesis through listening to the artists and blending their words, terms, and thinking with mine in my interpretations of what they said.

1.5
Structure & Content

I have already begun to trace some of the key findings that run through this thesis. Here, I first outline the study’s structure and then give a brief description of each chapter’s content, presenting key themes and discussions. I arrange my findings in a way which presents a somewhat familiar route through a story, that is, the artists’ experiences of before, during, and after art schooling. The content of the study’s three findings chapters (four, five, and six) follows this order. This sequential approach is discussed further in the methodology chapter, with reference to the chronology of my interview questions and the details of my fracturing the data derived from interviewing the artists and piecing it back together in this way. Within these chapters, the core categories of identity, myth, freedom, and professionalisation, and the tensions that shape and are

shaped by these are interwoven, and in chapter seven these are brought together and analysed, establishing the overarching findings of this research.

I begin in chapter two by setting the scene, positioning extant theory in support of the core categories that has been led by the findings. I outline key background information on higher educational and cultural policies that have shaped UK art schooling, as well as detailing significant discussion on the arts as professions and artists as professionals. I foreground artistic identification, outlining why identity prevails in this study, and contextualise its entangled counterpart artistic myth and its interconnection with certain freedoms, which stem from art schooling, influencing artists' lives and careers. Next, in chapter three, I present the methodology, detailing how I used Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) with arts-based/informed methods. I review my development of coding and analytic memoing processes, that involved my combining of drawing, making, speaking, filming, editing, and performing, with recommended GTM methods, to make meaning through material, reflexive, and performative processes, which I call *Analytic Memoing & Materialising* (AMM). I outline my research position and approach, and discuss data collection, interviewing, question development, and participant recruitment, situating my emic position, and self-reflective/diffractive (Barad, 2007) approaches to this.

In the next three chapters (four, five, and six), I present my findings, bringing together, analysing, and advancing the overarching themes interpreted through in-depth data analysis, presenting the knowledge and understanding derived from this study. In chapter four, *Motivation: Why go to Art School?*, I outline the artists' reasons and justifications for attending art school. Discussion centres on the following key areas; performing congruently with the self-concept and longstanding self-beliefs around being an artist; seeking opportunities in London, in the reputations of chosen art schools, and in the likemindedness of peers; gaining stamps of approval by learning and performing art's institutional codes of professional conduct; and, engaging with mythologised notions of luck, contradicting other motivations in asserting that attending art school was a fluke or lucky, and highlighting self-determination. Chapter five, *Reaction: On the Inside*, considers the artists' experiences during art school. The central discussion points I cover are; experiences, incorporations, and rejections of the skilling encountered (termed *Art School Absorptions* (ASA)), and defining perceptions

of professional development; ways of learning through organised art school pedagogy such as C/crits[12] and structurelessness, and incidental yet apparently student-led learning described as osmotic; and, the negation of the art school, asserted through the combined acts of negation and declarations of self-ledness around what kinds of skilling, learning, and definitions are taken on and/or denied by the artists. Chapter six, *Recovery|Continuum: Reclaiming, Regaining & Returning*, moves on to what happens after art school, and considers; magnitudes of disappointment post-study and the effects of hindsight and nostalgia in surmounting this; navigations of the 'real world' that supposedly exists outside of the art school 'bubble', in which increased consciousness of and attempts to overcome impeding myths occur (termed *de/re-mythification*) alongside juggling paid work and practice, and handling tensions around becoming artist-teachers; and, the capacities of the artists to adapt, accept, recover, and self-regulate themselves and their practice, embedding relative autonomy around the conditions of their new and ongoing circumstances.

In chapter seven, *The Constant Tussle: Identity, Myth, Freedom, & Professionalisation*, I analyse and consolidate findings from chapters four, five and six, formulating and presenting the core categories of identity, myth, freedom, and professionalisation. These are situated around the overarching idea that art schooling causes deep tensions, contradictions, and conflicts in artists' identities, practices, lives, and careers. Through this I foreground; that multiple distinctive artist identities, imbued with varying degrees of art schooled tensions are shaped, negotiated, and navigated through this period in the artists' lives and beyond; that mythification is heightened and perpetuated through art schooling, causing deep tensions, after which *de/re-mythification* is folded into acts of resistance in attempts to self-regulate; that the artists' responses to art schooled tensions constitute practices of freedom, towards conditional and relative freedoms that I term *profound-reified-autonomies*; and lastly, that the artists' professional identities and professionalisation are co-negotiated through these and the art school pedagogies that have influenced them.

[12] I use the term 'C/crit' to recognise that sometimes it is considered a proper noun 'Crit' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018), and often a common or general noun 'crit' (Newall, 2019; Crippa, 2015). I use 'C/crit' to enable readers to determine their consideration of that, and to acknowledge the 'metaphysical and physical entanglements' (jagodzinski, 2018:37) of this way of learning.

Finally, in chapter eight, I situate my findings alongside the research enquiry, aims, and objectives, also indicating the study's original contribution. I reflect on the implications of this research on policy and pedagogy development, and make recommendations for further study. I anticipate my distinctive approach to this research will further critical qualitative research methodologies, and that the findings I present will advance understanding of art schooled artists under professional pedagogies, extending the knowledge of artists' experiences of fine art education, of the impacts of professional pedagogies on artists' lives, and of improvements that might be made within higher arts education.

Chapter 2
2. POSITIONING
Policy & Profession: Identity, Myth, Freedom

2.1
Introduction

In this chapter I outline the backdrop to this research, situating the themes and core categories I discuss throughout in historical and political theoretical contexts. As per the GTM approach, instead of carrying out a literature review prior to research being conducted (Urquhart & Fernandez, 2006; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Dunne, 2011), the theoretical frames I draw on throughout the thesis and situate here, are driven by the findings derived from my analysis. This means, as Charmaz (2006:126) notes, extant theoretical concepts are justified within the thesis. They come through the research, not the other way around.

Before outlining the contents of this chapter, I note that this research is seen and positioned through both Anglo(-American) and London-based lenses, meaning it exists in a field of many studies that come from these angles. This is owing to the subject matter, the necessary geographic location (discussed in the previous chapter), and influential political ideologies, that I review in this chapter. When coupled with my subjective and constructed background, situation, and limitations as a researcher, my experiences and proximity to living and working in the UK, and majoritively in London, these factors are foreseeable.

In section 2.2, I position the political history of UK art schools, focussing on significant cultural and higher educational policy that brought professionalisation to the fore of pedagogical activity, and which my interests in conducting this study are fundamentally based. In section 2.3, I define the parameters of the arts as professions and artists as professionals, situating the core category of professionalisation. Finally, in section 2.4, I position the core categories of identity, myth, and freedom. While these are inextricably bound, I discuss them independently as well as highlighting their entanglement, also referring to other themes throughout that extend from these topics and are examined during the thesis.

In each section I introduce the theoretical frames raised through my analyses, recognising these works as invaluable in situating my findings and, in some case, taking my ideas (and theirs) further. Researcher's work that are significantly drawn upon are; Beck and Cornford (2012, 2014), and Kenning (2018) on art schools; on pedagogy Baldacchino, (2015, 2019), Garoian, (2015), jagodzinski (2018), and Orr and Shreeve (2018); McRobbie (2016) on cultural policy, and Banks (2017) on creative justice; Larson (2013[1977]), Paquette (2012), and Nicolini and Roe (2014) on professional identities; Taylor and Littleton (2012), and Banks and Oakley (2015) on artists' identities related to art schooling; and finally, Bain (2005), Røyseng, Mangset and Borgen (2007), and Wesner (2018) on artist identities and myth.

2.2

Professionalisation: Policy Progenitors & Pedagogical Paradigms

According to Houghton (2016) six distinct art and design pedagogical models have existed across Europe, including in the UK. They are; the *Apprentice* (circa European Middle Ages), the *Academic* (circa Italian Renaissance), the *Formalist* (circa 1900/60s), the *Expressive* (circa 1950/60s), the *Conceptual* (circa 1970s onwards) and, as introduced in the previous chapter, the *Professional Curriculum* (circa 1990s onwards) (ibid.). Some models have left indelible marks on today's undergraduate fine art teaching in the UK, including; from the *Apprentice Curriculum*, the masterclass (see Newall, 2019); from the *Academic Curriculum*, the traditional life drawing room and the notion that being an artist 'is not fundamentally about practical skills, but something of higher value, status and even calling' (Houghton, 2016:110); from the *Expressive Curriculum*, leaving students 'to express themselves and develop their talent' (ibid.:113); and from the *Conceptual Curriculum*, the emphasis on process and critical theory (ibid.:114-115). Some of these claims can be critiqued, such as access to formal and technical skilling, and that the notion of talent is contingent on varying degrees of capital that students have at their disposal affecting development (Bourdieu, 1986; Banks, 2017). Nonetheless, the present *Professional Curriculum* is understood to embody many of these elements, as well as being deeply interconnected with government agendas. In this section, I outline a brief history of UK art schools and the policies that have formed them, discussing influential political ideologies and the interrelation of changing pedagogical paradigms that have together shaped the *Professional Curriculum*.

2.2.1 UK Art Schools 1760-1960

Art schools in the UK have had strong ties with political agendas since their inception. The primary aim of the first government schools, those of Edinburgh's *School of Art and Design* in 1760, London's *Royal Academy* in 1768, and later, in 1837, the *Government School of Design*, today known as the *Royal College of Art* (RCA), was to plug a deficit in skilled British designers to compete in these industries with Europe (see Strand, 1987). The RCA was specifically created to train students in applied art and design by the 1835 government Select Committee who were tasked with finding 'the best means of extending a knowledge of the Arts and the Principles of Design among the people, especially the manufacturing population of the country' (ibid.:1). These schools fulfilled a role by inscribing standardised styles, producing generically skilled useful graduates to compete in the design and manufacturing economy. As a seemingly bygone purpose, it is not so far removed from today's art schools and their instrumental positions provisioning access to the CCIs (McRobbie, 2011a; Banks & Oakley, 2015). Nor, when contemplating the art school's role as an organisation of the institutions of both education and art, the latter described as the 'art machine' that includes, 'arts schools, galleries and dealers, art critics, auction houses, fairs and art events, (private and public) collectors, and museums' (Rodner & Thompson, 2013:16).

The cornerstone of the UK's original art schools were the exacting standards required of students in drawing the ''accurate' representation of the visible world' through compulsory classes in 'figure drawing, modelling, still life and pictorial composition' (Lord, c.2008). This was maintained until the mid-twentieth century. Elsewhere, vast pedagogical changes were occurring in higher arts education (HAE) in Europe and North America[13]. In particular, the influence of the Bauhaus movement, which began in Germany in 1919, was transforming the entire pedagogical/conceptual framework and outputs of art education with its Modern formalist approach that instilled 'abstraction, performance and material experimentation' (Thorne, 2019) over standardised representational techniques. The Bauhaus closed down in 1933, curtailed by Nazi demands (ibid.), and some say under 'the pressure of its own contradictions'

[13] The USA's Black Mountain College (1933-1957) was an influential art school with an avant-garde approach, which rejected 'rote learning' and embraced minimal structure, influenced by the Bauhaus (see Newall, 2019:91).

(de Duve, 1994:23), perhaps alluding to its desire to free art education from the rigidity of the academy yet simultaneously instilling rigorous rules that governed formal art making (see Newall, 2019:75). Nevertheless, its influence persisted through Bauhaus artists working in exile from Nazi Germany elsewhere (Malherek, 2018), and it rippled throughout HAE in the UK. It was seen as the only coherent rival to the 'old academic model' (de Duve, 1994:23), and though its effects are still accepted today (Orr & Shreeve, 2018; Newall, 2019), others consider that it no longer has the 'residual influence that it once had' (Llewelyn, 2015:17).

Nonetheless, it is maintained as influencing the transformative changes to occur in UK HAE policy that came with reforms implemented through the *First* (and *Second*) *Coldstream Reports* of 1960 (and 1970 respectively). The reports were devised by artist and educator Sir William Coldstream, who was both chair of the National Advisory Council on Art Education (NACAE) and Principal of Fine Art at *The Slade School of Art*, one of the UK's oldest art schools, established in 1871, and notably existing within the university framework as a collegiate of *University College London*. Independence and institutionalisation are prominently debated contexts of art schools underscoring discussion on professional pedagogies in this thesis, which I situate further shortly. The consequences of the reports however, represented a significant shift for HAE in the UK, with the emphasis being 'to give a good deal of freedom to art schools within the limits of a single framework' (Coldstream, HMSO, 1960, cited in Strand, 1987:213). While liberating art schools to devise their own pedagogies was a main aim, the policies delivered through the reports also academicised the schools, seeking more intellectual students for the new fine art courses they had established. This was achieved through implementing tougher entry requirements, including needing five 'O' Levels[14] (though 'outstanding artistic promise' (Coldstream, HMSO, 1960) might also be accepted), plus the establishment of an extra tier of study in the Foundation Course[15] (or Diploma in Art and Design/Dip.AD), which had to be passed to attend. As well, compulsory History of Art and Complementary Studies were introduced, equating to 15% of student marks achieved through the introduction of written papers and specific classes

[14] The GCE 'O' Levels, or General Certificate of Education 'Ordinary level' was the secondary school qualification for compulsory education in the UK, the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) replaced this in 1988, and is still used today.

[15] The Foundation Course is a one-year Diploma course required for entry onto most art and design undergraduate degrees in the UK.

conducted by accredited teachers (Banks & Oakley, 2015), changing the landscape not only for students but for teachers too. These new systems sought to bring arts courses in line with other disciplines in universities (Strand, 1987), understood to have been influenced by Coldstream's position as professor of an art school that already existed within a university (Massouras, 2012). Raising visual art's academic credentials met the goal of disassociating it from its historical alignment with the trades. The lasting influence of the *Coldstream Reports* is widely considered to have brought the most substantial change to HAE of any reform before or since (Beck & Cornford, 2012; Massouras, 2012; Banks & Oakley, 2015; Willer, 2018). It also had an accumulative institutionalising effect on art schools, which I discuss next alongside professionalisation and influential political ideologies and policies administered since.

2.2.2 Political Ideologies & Professionalising Policies

The *Coldstream Reports* of 1960 and 1970 have been considered main progenitors of professionalised pedagogies in UK art schools (see Massouras, 2012). The liberalising and academicising effects these policies had on the new courses are certainly part of the historical professionalising of art and design pedagogies. However, to fully understand art school's *Professional Curriculum* (Houghton, 2016) of today, it is also necessary to understand the influence of the political contexts and policy objectives of the latter half of the 20th century too. Many overlapping factors have contributed to the professionalisation, and interconnected *institutionalisation*, of art schooling. Possibly the most predominant is the overarching and successively maintained neoliberal political ideology of UK (and many international) governments since the 1970s. In the UK, this was initially fostered through an allegiance between the then US President Ronald Reagan and UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who together instigated the 'privatisation, deregulation, financialisation and globalisation' (Radice, 2013) of the public sector, and according private ones (i.e. banking and finance), that became the central tenets of neoliberalism. Later, during the 1980s and 1990s, under successive Conservative (1979-1997) and New Labour (1997-2010) governments, even while some dispute the latter's policies as distinctly neoliberal (see Hill et al. 2013; Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015), the dominant ideology was continued through the initiation and embedding of *New Public Managerialism* (NPM). NPM's mission was to impose the 'values, structures and processes of private sector management…upon the public

sector' (Radice, 2013:408), some say enforcing 'brutalistic, finance-driven, authoritarian forms of management' (Hill et al. 2013:60) on public services. This included higher education, shaping its steady privatisation, embedding an 'audit-culture' (Radice, 2013:413) through 'increased forms of surveillance and control' (Hill et al. 2013). In addition, in 1999, the Bologna Declaration (EHEA, 1999) standardised EU member's higher education policies and practices into a three-cycle system of BA, MA, and Doctorate programs. Signatories, including the UK, agreed to adopt a system of comparable degrees. This is considered part of 'a coordinated strategy to place higher education in the service of economic growth and global competitiveness' (Whelan & Ryan, 2018:31), in line with neoliberal expectations. These key (mostly ongoing[16]) situations have all influenced the centralisation of art education's management and its institutionalisation.

For art schools, though alignment with fulfilling government needs began much earlier, the slippage towards institutionalisation, as discussed, had begun in the 1960s with Coldstream's academicising reforms that aligned art and design education with other disciplines of the university. Then, in 1965 came another significant transformation with the dawn of the *Polytechnic Era* (Llewellyn, 2015). This saw the extensive restructuring of UK higher education with the establishment of seven new universities and thirty polytechnic colleges between 1968 and 1973 (Pratt, 1997). The polytechnics were formed by merging local technical colleges, existing art schools, and other colleges together. The impact on independent art schools[17] was significant, reducing their numbers by absorbing them into umbrella institutions. This move essentially cut ties (and funding) with local authorities and moved towards a centrally funded (and governed) set up that imitated universities (Pratt, 1997:303). Amid these changes came resistance however. In 1968 a rebellion broke out in the UK art schools[18] against these and previous art educational restructures (see Tickner, 2008). A wave of art school protests and sit-ins emerged, beginning at London's Hornsey School of Art. The students were frustrated by a perceived 'lack of relevance to contemporary society,

[16] The UK's departure from the EU, may affect the Bologna Declaration for the UK (see Scott, 2018).
[17] Until that time art schools had remained relatively independent as local authority funded colleges, but with significant autonomy from central government's HE policies (Beck & Cornford, 2012).
[18] This occurred among wider socio-political unrest in 1968, most notably in Paris, where protesters challenged the 'conservative establishment', opposed 'the negative impact of industrialised work processes', and demanded 'more effective participatory democracy' (Lyon, c.2008).

limited or even inadequate facilities, and distant, inaccessible management and decision-making processes', and opposed 'new course structures and requirements' (Lyon, c.2008), particularly the entrance qualifications implemented through the *Coldstream Reports*. Their central aim was 'to set the terms of their own education' (Walton, 2018). However, in 1992, more changes came which would challenge this, as the *Further and Higher Education Act* (Great Britain, DfE, 1992) was implemented. This initiated the *University Era* (Llewellyn, 2015), which swiftly condensed polytechnics into universities, diminishing the number of independent art schools further as they became colleges or departments of universities, and advancing their entrenchment within the institution of education as a result (Harvey, 2012). The substantial, and probably irrevocable, changes of this period for UK art schooling are striking when considering that in 1959 there were 180 independent art schools, and by 2012 this had depleted to around a dozen (Beck & Cornford, 2012), the rest had been culled, absorbed, or institutionalised through the *University Era*.

In combination these policies institutionalised HAE in the UK. The subsumption of art schools into universities meant the structures and policies of the university would permeate art schools as part of legitimisation processes of institutionalisation (Lammers & Garcia, 2017:199-200). The universities' 'social processes, obligations, or actualities [could] take on a rule-like status in social thought and action' in the art schools, 'driven as much by external forces as functional requirements' (ibid.). It raised deep concerns that HAE would become 'subject to the same kind of generalising academic and professional pressures that have always been applied in the governance of university subjects' (Thomson, 2005, cited in Beck & Cornford, 2012:63). Indeed, a new set of policies (and pressures) were applied to universities throughout the late 1990s and 2000s, felt in the art schools that were now faculties and departments in these institutions. These included New Labour's introduction of tuition fees in 1998 of £1,000 per year. Subsequent rises have continued, increasing to £3,000 per year in 2003 (New Labour), £9,000 per year in 2012 (Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition), and to £9,250 per year in 2017[19] (Conservative). The discrepancies paid by

[19] Tuition fees continue to be reviewed. In May 2019 the Augar Report released its independent review of post-18 education. It recommended decreasing tuition fees to £7,500 per annum, reintroducing maintenance grants for disadvantaged students, and increasing repayment plans to 40 years (ibid.), meaning, in real terms, more interest would be paid. It received criticism for being most damaging for arts courses (see Wright, 2019), for not considering student housing costs (see Kingham 2019), and,

the participants in this study, who attended between 1989 and 2016, range from those who paid nothing (plus received material stipends from local authorities), to some who paid £27,000 for their fine art education. This highlights the sharp increase in the cost of higher (arts) education, resonating with injustices linked to decreased attendance of working class or disadvantaged students, particularly in creative subjects (see Banks & Oakley, 2015; Banks, 2017)[20]. Also notable is the shift towards the individual student paying for their education, rather than this being supported through taxation (see McGettigan, 2013).

Further pressures on universities, and thus institutionalised art schools, came in 1999/2002 from government employability agendas (Great Britain, DWP, 2002). These have defined the vocationalisation of higher education, based on the reasoning that, 'given the substantial public investment in university students, it is particularly important that they are employable upon graduation' (Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown, Chancellor of Exchequer, 1999, in Smith et al. 2000:382). The development and delivery of 'the individual's employability skills and attributes' (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005) became paramount as work-ready graduates were (and still are) anticipated to slot into the according industries that (supposedly) await them. Employability and enterprise policies have been exposed as an unscrupulous and transparent mechanism to 'ensure that [governments] and the banks are repaid [the student debts]' that are a 'financial condition for entrance into higher education' (Federici, 2017). They are linked to disproportionate marketisation and unsustainable expectations of higher education in provisioning the work force, seen as especially unfeasible for creative subjects (Smith et al. 2000; Mason et al. 2006; Wheelahan, 2010; Belfiore & Upchurch, 2013). There are considerable difficulties for subjects like fine art in preparing/skilling individuals ready for artistic 'employment', as well as somehow measuring that, when employment itself is indeterminate for many artist-graduates. Indeed, these policies underscore skills debates, noted in chapter one and discussed further in chapter five, over what fine art students ought to be taught. Though important to consider, a starting

while notionally in favour of lifelong learning, not offering robustly supported/financed delivery of this (see Callender, 2020).

[20] Those identifying as working class in this study doubted their financial capacity to attend art school now (P3:510, P10:1884, P9:1476). They felt students are consumers/customers of education today (P3:529, P5:95), contradicting government predictions upon introducing fees that stated, 'we do not believe that students will in the future see themselves simply as customers of higher education but rather as members of a learning community' (Dearing, 1997:64).

point for these discussions may not be questioning what skills artists need for employment or enterprise, but rather, asking what are artists' needs in supporting their practice? What could/should the relationship between fine art education and industry be? And, how could/should this be met or measured through fine art education? Asking these types of questions is facilitated through my interpretive approach that uses GTM, which I discuss further in the next chapter.

Measuring the teaching and application of employability skills has become a genuine demand placed on art schools within universities, since a series of performance assessments were launched following the employability agendas. In line with NPM's instilling of competition through the generation of comparable datasets, the aim has been to evaluate the effectiveness of institutions and specific courses, and then pit them against one another. This is achieved through merging data from the National Student Survey (NSS[21]) introduced in 2005, the Research Excellence Framework (REF[22]) in 2014, and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF[23]) in 2017[24]. The metrics from these are compared against data gathered on graduate employment. Furthermore, since 2017 institutions can raise tuition fees in line with inflation (Universities UK, 2019) according to the results of these market driven audits. Under the alias of providing students with 'choice' (Great Britain, DfE, 2017) by supposedly 'placing students at the centre' (Gourlay & Stevenson, 2017:391), these measures are considered to expose art education to 'the market ideals of neoliberalism, systematizing academic work into predictable outcomes that are comparable' (Kalin, 2012:43). There are deep concerns these methods could 'fundamentally alter the market viability of certain university courses' (Morris 2017, cited in Kenning, 2018:3), such as fine art where employment

[21] NSS gathers 'feedback from final-year undergraduate students about the quality of their course experience'. While 'helping applicants to make informed choices of subject, program and institution' and contributing 'to public accountability for teaching' (Bòtas & Brown, 2013:47), it is criticised for producing generic results attributable to its inability to account for institutional differences (ibid.:50). It has been boycotted by students for its role in tuition fee increases (UCU, 2020).

[22] REF assesses 'the quality of research in UK higher education institutions' (REF2021, 2020). However, in valorising only a 'narrow model of research' it is condemned as a 'an instrument of neoliberal governmentality...designed to force institutions to compete for finite amounts of public money' (O'Regan & Gray, 2018).

[23] TEF consists of three measures: 'teaching quality, including student satisfaction; the institutional environment in which students learn; and student outcomes, including the performance of under-represented groups' (Gunn, 2018).

[24] At the time of writing, the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) (Research England, 2020) was in its pilot/consultation phase. Its aim is 'to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public funding for knowledge exchange (KE) and to further a culture of continuous improvement in universities', enabling 'a fair comparison of [higher education] providers across a diverse sector'.

outcomes are exceptionally difficult to trace when artists' working lives are known to be complex, often precarious, and insecure (Gill & Pratt, 2008; Hill et al. 2013; McRobbie, 2016; Taylor & Luckman, 2020). That artists' employment patterns cannot be sufficiently measured means the data is unreliable and works against art schools in an audit-driven educational climate. Moreover, since the advent of tuition fees, the creation of student-customers/consumers has been widely criticised as damaging and unfair (Bishop, 2012; Tomlinson, 2014; Bunce et al. 2017), whereby situating artist-students in a 'student-as-rational-investor model' becomes a 'seriously 'bad bet'' (Kenning, 2018:2). This has placed unrealistic expectations and transactional values on arts education, students, and teachers. However, it is easy to see how the *Professional Curriculum* is prevailing, and those planning fine art courses have found it increasingly necessary to instil professional practice as core curricula activity, certainly since the educational reforms and political ideologies of the 1960s and 1970s, and absolutely against the backdrop of the past thirty years. The timeline below (figure 1) presents an overview of the events and policies discussed above.

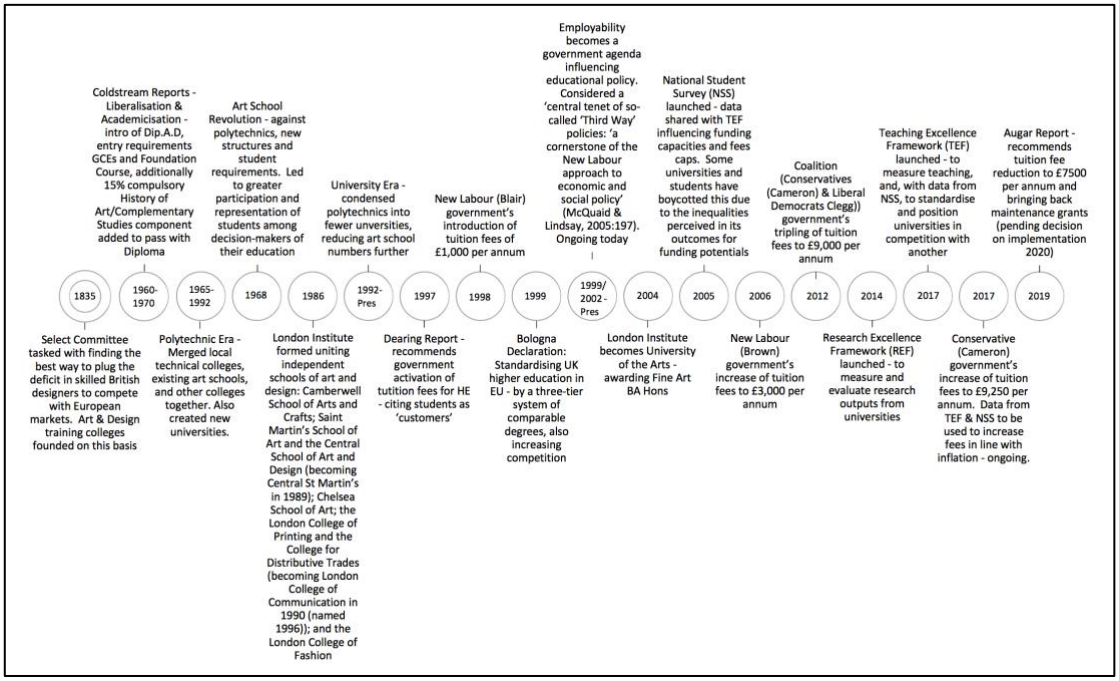

Figure 1: Timeline of Influential Policies on UK Art Schooling

2.2.3 Current Perspectives, Acceptances, & Alternatives

In contrast to fine art education's challenges I present above, positive viewpoints on the allegiance of art schools and universities also exist. For example, Banks and Oakley (2015:2) see that 'many precarious institutions appear to have had their lives extended

by becoming absorbed into singular or federal partnerships within the university system'. Others suggest, that though it is thought art schools have compromised to fit into the academic confines of the university, the university is also learning about and accepting new forms of practice-based knowledge from art schools that 'helps stretch university ideas about what counts as knowledge' and 'has relevance across the disciplines' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:157). With practice-based research having been recognised by REF (ibid.), a cynical perspective might conclude it resembles another co-option of knowledge to be measured, benchmarked, and marketised under neoliberal ideologies. Nevertheless, other benefits are suggested, such as that 'art school staff have had to articulate to others, which has helped them understand the nature of their pedagogy and practices', leading to 'more literature about creative, studio-based pedagogy that can be shared more widely' (ibid.:156), and that the justification of these practices has meant they 'have become more rigorous' (ibid.).

It could appear from this that art schools have accepted their fate under the *University Era* (Llewellyn, 2015), that some of those who operate within the institution (teachers, students, curriculum developers, critics) have stopped challenging the systematic marketisation of art education, and with it the entrepreneurialisation of art practice. Indeed, just over a decade ago, in 2009, some arts educators were still demonstrably torn, asking, 'should the art school turn itself into a monastery that protects students from the evil forces outside or should it invite the market in and become a kind of lively bazaar?' (Birnbaum, 2009:238). In contrast, today, other arts educators seem more convinced, instead asking, 'how can we capitalise on the opportunities that a more entrepreneurial approach to HE provides for students, staff, academic institutions, communities and the wider cultural and creative industries sector?' (TCCE, 2019). These differing positions demonstrate wider acceptance and absorption of employability and enterprise as deliverable outcomes of HAE. This notion is perpetuated by some London art school's complicity in coordinating and hosting conferences and events that directly aim to embed employability and enterprise agendas[25] (see CHEAD, 2015, and TCCE, 2019). In leading the discussion on this,

[25] The 2015 conference *What is the Point of Employability in Art and Design?* (CHEAD, 2015) was hosted by Chelsea College of Arts for art and design educators/curriculum developers to discuss how to embed enterprise and employability at the core of creative education (ibid.). In 2019, the *Culture Capital Exchange Creative Entrepreneurship Forum* was co-organised by UAL colleges

these art schools interlock this agenda more explicitly into their pedagogies, as well as embedding this in their brand identities, and the identities of their students. Indeed, the 'entrepreneurial ethos' entrenched through employability agendas and professional curricula, 'offers more than career and professional sustainability advice: it targets student subjectivity itself', influencing 'attitudes and forms of behaviour thought likely to advantage the individual within established, competitive market conditions' (Kenning, 2018:4), a notion I return to later in this chapter, and which surfaces again through discussion around skilling in chapter five, and on professional identities in chapter seven.

The picture described above characterises art schools as functional and compliant organisations, that have experienced much adversity in their incorporation into universities and submission to neoliberalism. There are studies however, that emphasise art schools within universities can take ownership of pedagogical design in spite of the regulations imposed by policy (see Crippa, 2014). Other ways of dealing with the hyper-marketisation and audit-driven culture of HE can be seen in the current bloom of alternative art schools that are non-accredited and independent from the demands faced by HAE (for example: Open School East (2020), The Other MA (2020), School of the Damned (2020), Islington Mill Academy (2020), Fairfield International (2020), and AltMFA (2020)). Alternative models embed 'pedagogical practices as art practice or artist-driven education' (Kalin, 2012:43), or 'art-as-pedagogy' (Bishop, 2012). Other pedagogical imperatives centralise embodied knowledge and the development of 'prosthetic pedagogies' (Garoian, 2015) as ways of knowing and being in and through the body. As well, the influence of the post-human ontologies of the 'Chthulucene'[26] (Haraway, 2015) invite arts educators to devise pedagogies that reawaken artist-students to 'fabulate' and become the 'cosmic artisans' of the future (jagodzinski, 2018). What remains, however, is arts' entanglement with institutionalisation and professionalisation, which I consider next as I outline the arts' and artists' relationships with professions and professionalism.

Camberwell, Chelsea, and Wimbledon Colleges of Arts (CCW), to discuss 'the coming together of academic life, enterprise and entrepreneurship' (TCCE, 2019).

[26] Haraway (2015) terms Earth's current epoch the 'Chthulucene', adding to Anthropocene, Plantationocene, and Capitalocene, in recognising human's impact. Specifically, Haraway's term 'refers to processes of reworlding' (Parsons, 2019), positioning post-humanism and the 'chance of living on' (jagodzinski, 2018) within human grasp.

2.3
Visual Arts as Professions & Artists as Professionals

It could be that the arts (and artists) have been institutionalised since becoming a profession, and not necessarily vice versa as positioned above. Indeed, theorists of New Institutionalism[27] suggest that 'professions are institutionalized occupations' (Abbott 1988, in Lammers & Garcia, 2017:197). In this section, I consider this as I outline a historical context of the professions, the arts as a profession, and artists as professionals. After, I define the current situation of visual artists' professional and professionalised identities in relation to HAE and the neoliberal backdrop, and outline a working definition of artists' professional identities discussed throughout the rest of the thesis.

2.3.1 The Arts & The Professions: Parameters & Participation

The professionalisation of visual arts practice in UK art schools is considered 'an increasingly significant component of higher education study in the UK' (Kenning, 2018:1). It is also considered the 'enemy of the arts' (Saltz, 2003, cited in Daichendt, 2012:25), because, the newly 'professionalized discipline…values the intellectual and the philosophical over the craft and technical origins of art education' (Daichendt, 2012:25). This rhetoric implies the recent professionalisation of the arts and artists. However, within this, the meaning of 'professional' needs defining (or redefining), because the arts have been recognised as a profession and artists as professionals in a European context, according to Durkheim (1957), since medieval and prehistoric times. Ancient craft guilds of Rome (around 600 BC), initiated under King Numa (715-673 BC) and later in the time of Cicero (106 BC), thrived as training and organising bodies of professional arts (ibid.:17). One British guild, *The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths* founded in twelfth century London, formed Goldsmiths' Technical and Recreative Institute in 1891, becoming Goldsmiths' College in 1904 under University of London, and establishing the School of Art that still exists today. The arts have seemingly sustained their position as a profession since the guilds (see Freidson, 1986:54), barring fluctuations in historical documentation between the 1300s and 1700s (Prest, 1987), during which most professions were 'somewhat overlooked' because

[27] *New Institutionalism* is defined by 'the symbolic role of formal structure (rather than on the informal organization)' (Lammers & Garcia, 2017:199) in which the organisation is 'constituted by the environment in which it was embedded'. It is distinct from *Old Institutionalism*, which 'focuses more on specific organizations than on environments' (ibid.:198).

they were 'largely served and were recruited from the gentry and nobility' (ibid.:8). I continue to discuss access to professional participation shortly, however, the arts resurface again as professions in the 1800s through the Arts & Crafts guilds[28]. But, by the end of that century, debate was emerging over whether Architecture, the founding discipline of *The Art Worker's Guild*, a major professional organisation for artists and craftspeople, was a 'Profession or an Art' (Stamp, c.1975). This question has continued to be asked of the arts in varying degrees since.

During the First Industrial Revolution (c.1760-1840)[29], the 'professional classes were coming of age' (Donkin, 2001:106). The status of professionals (skilled labour) was being pit against the industrialists (unskilled labour) who were usually uneducated, whereas professionals had 'the benefit of classical education' (Donkin, 2001:105). At this point, being educated became a prominent defining factor of the professions, separating professionals and amateurs. Another crucial change for professional parameters and participation was significant democratisation after England's 1832 electoral reforms that opened up professional careers to the middle classes (Larson, 2013[1977]). Along with education this positioned 'merit against birth and patronage', initiating 'a novel possibility of *gaining status through work*' (ibid.:5 original emphasis). Considered a 'great transformation' (Polanyi, 1944, cited in Larson, 2013[1977]:xvi), another came at the turn of the 20th century, which shifted the entire socio-politico-economic landscape towards a market economy that was 'dominated by the reorganisation of economy and society around the market' (Larson, 2013[1977]:xvi), which 'the professions could hardly escape the effects of' (ibid.:9). These changes significantly impacted who could become a professional. Similarly, today's political ideology of neoliberalism continues to influence access to the

[28] These guilds originated through the UK Arts & Crafts movement (c.1860s-1920s), led by artists John Ruskin and William Morris. In reaction to 'the damaging effects of industrialisation' and 'the relatively low status of the decorative arts', they reformed 'the design and manufacture of everything from buildings to jewellery' (VAM, 2020).

[29] In the UK, the First industrial Revolution (c.1760-1840), moved from agrarian and crafts-based economies to coal and steam powered manufacturing and industry (White, 2009). The Second Industrial Revolution, (or Technological Revolution) (c.1860-1940), was epitomised by chemical synthesis of materials and mass-manufacture technologies enabled by the factory (Britannica, 2018). The Third Industrial Revolution (c.1960-2000) is categorised by IT and electronics, nuclear power, and robotics (Schwab, 2018). Today, the Fourth Industrial Revolution encompasses digital, the Internet and Smart technologies (ibid.).

professions, especially through constricting access to higher education (Burke et al., 2015), that is a common route in to creative careers (Taylor & Luckman, 2020).

Education and access are still markers and hurdles separating professionals and amateurs. Pay is also a factor. Today's professionalism, for artists and more widely, is tightly interwoven with the neoliberalised ability to centralise remuneration, coupled with the ability to brand and market oneself to meet the dominant (free market) economy demands. A far cry from the vulgar and 'grubby' notion of 'commercial transactions' and 'receiving money directly from clients' (Donkin, 2001:105) that professional classes of the 19th century would stoop to. Mostly, professionals, including barristers, lawyers, or the clergy, did not 'extend their hands for payment' (ibid.). Artists were also exempt from this, being supported by patrons of the church or monarchy. I note the historical existence of professionals' condescension of the vulgar business-end, and artists' patronage, because of its relevance to the artists in this study who have experienced, and I find, attempt to reject, these kinds of professionalising effects of art schooling. The vulgarity of the business-end attested to by the artists I interviewed may well signify a traditional professional stance of not wanting to be involved in those dealings, as well imbricating historical and somewhat mythologised ideals of patronised and supported artists, topics I discuss further later. Next, I situate changes in professionalism and different dynamics that have shaped it.

2.3.2 Professions & Professional(ised) Identities

While the arts have been considered professions for centuries, what constitutes a profession, and a professional individual or artist, has significantly altered, shifting with changing social and political paradigms. In sociological (Macdonald, 1995), and cultural policy (Paquette, 2012) accounts of the professions, different schools of thought are outlined that have attempted to define what a profession, being a professional, or having a professional identity means. Modern sociological mapping begins with the functionalist's (Parsons, 1939, 1963; Durkheim, 1957; Wilensky, 1964) definitions of the early to mid 20th century, who claimed the professions had a rigid set of traits, and compiled lists of qualities for the 'ideal-typical profession' (Macdonald 1995:3). However, these parameters are now considered narrow and restrictive, such as distinguishing professions by formal 'technical knowledge', 'professional norms',

regulatory 'associations', and 'monopoly of the practice' (Paquette, 2012:4). Professional identities were related to a 'function of prestige' (ibid.:5), which though might be still inherent, is not all they are. Later, the interactionists (Becker, 1963; Freidson 1986), from the 1960s onwards, repositioned the professions within a broader 'cultural dimension' as 'ritualised social behaviour' or 'stabilized social practices consistent with the pressures of a given social world' (Paquette, 2012:5). They centralised the 'inner life' (ibid.) of professionals, engendering the notion that individuals were capable of professionalising themselves; the term professional became an act. Professional identity was foregrounded and became connected to 'the individual's negotiation between social contingencies of the social world of work he or she evolves in' (ibid.:6).

During the 1970s and after, considerations of the professions incorporated understanding power dynamics between institutions, that were recognised as shaping the professions, and individuals, who were acknowledged as being able to negotiate their professional identities. Larson's (2013[1977]) theory, the *Professional Project*, encapsulated this combination of social power and collective action as 'the quest for professional status and the strategies that mobilized to gain this status' (Evetts, 1999, cited in Paquette, 2012:7). By that time, art schools were firmly embedded within higher educational institutions through the *Polytechnic* and *University Eras* (Llewellyn, 2015), meaning they became more influential as institutions that could shape the profession of visual artists, and significantly, artist-students could individually and collectively negotiate professional artistic identities through art schooling. More recently, identities (professional and otherwise) are thought to 'represent patterns of negotiation between an individual's social aspirations, desires, expectations, and the different forms of socialization one encounters' (Dubar, 2000, in Paquette, 2012:10). This shift has meant that professional identities can be 'inherited, learned, attributed and sometimes rejected by the individuals who enter a professional world' (ibid.), being that they consist 'of both identifying with and establishing a distinction from certain values and norms' (ibid.). As well, identities are also considered manifold, in that, 'rather than having one fixed version of who we are, we all move between multiple identities' (Silverman, 2007, cited in Butler-Kisber, 2018:12), a condition I extend understanding of concerning visual artists in this study through the theme of identity

that is interwoven throughout the findings chapters and discussed in-depth in chapter seven as a core category. Professions and professional identities are consistently in flux due to the changing nature of the complex dynamics that shape their existences. The political ideologies, changing social and institutional powers, and the individual and collective negotiations of identities that create professionals and professions I have introduced here underlie this and further discussion throughout this thesis.

2.3.3 Situating Professional(ised) Artists

In terms of what this means for artists, and in defining parameters of what an art schooled professional(ised) artist entails that I consider and analyse in this study, is that there are many negotiations to consider. Such as, first and foremost gaining access to the institution/art school; not a simple feat when met with homophilic recruitment processes granting entry only to similar others (Banks, 2017). Furthermore, when access has been granted, navigating professionalising pedagogies that embed entrepreneurialism, as noted before, as a 'potent form of self-identification', entrenching a 'state of mind' that 'merges with an artistic persona' (Kenning, 2018:9), and operates on the same level as self-employment as a thinly veiled fallacy for autonomy (see Ryan, 1992, and Banks 2010); it is an understandably challenging arena to navigate. However, art schools are considered key sites of professional identity work (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:81), and given higher education's responsibilities in delivering employability agendas in relation to specific industries, industry-related professional identity work could also take place. Though, the notion of an industry in which artist-graduates might 'evaluate their own work and behaviour in the context of a work-place environment' (Paquette et al. 2016, cited in Orr & Shreeve, 2018:130), as other professionals are considered able to do, seems antithetical and is contested (Bain, 2005). Rather, for artist-students it is anticipated there are a 'range of practices into which they will establish their own version of art practice or practices' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:130) awaiting them for further negotiation post art school.

Ascertaining the outcomes of these negotiations, that might situate what an art schooled professional artist is, is a challenge that becomes deeply complex. Efforts to delineate the parameters of artists' professional status have been attempted. Some, from a cultural economics standpoint (Frey & Pommerehne, 1989, in Zanti, 2015:45) suggest

eight criteria can be considered. These include, 'time spent' on and 'income derived' from artistic work, an artists' 'reputation' and 'recognition' among 'the general public' and 'other artists', the 'quality of artistic work', 'membership' of professional bodies, 'professional qualifications (graduation from art schools)', and the 'subjective self-evaluation of being an artist' (ibid.). Though these are not unproblematic and difficult to ascertain/evaluate, they are broad in range, and crucially, the last measure is asserted by and discussed as key to the artists in this study. Self-evaluation is an important aspect of identification situated through the interconnected themes of identity, freedom, and professionalisation through the findings chapters and analysed in chapter seven as underlying self-regulation involved in professional identity work. Elsewhere, other criteria lists have been developed. For example Artists' Union England (AUE), an organisation which supports artists' rights concerning their artistic work and remuneration, has established professional status benchmarks that they use to determine membership eligibility. This includes 'regularly making and exhibiting' and receiving 'professional grants', to being 'featured in an art publication', 'represented by a gallery' or having 'a degree in visual or applied arts at undergraduate, post-graduate, BTEC or Diploma level' (AUE, 2020). However, while many of these might be relevant to artists' working lives, they are object/attainment centred. Critically, they do not incorporate the understanding of more nuanced attempts, such as Frey and Pommerehne (1989), that professional identification is also defined as 'one's professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences' (Ibarra, 1999, in Slay & Smith, 2011:85), rather than having been commissioned by a public institution (another of AUE's criteria). I believe it remains that, as Bain (2005:34) suggests, 'there are no official prerequisites or credentials to distinguish artists from non-artists, professionals from amateurs', and with no 'clear definitional parameters' (ibid.:26) to distinguish them, it is difficult to fully accept criteria lists as defining artistic professionalism when melded with the complexities of identification. It is these deep intricacies that are surfaced and analysed through this research. As a reference point in this study, I propose an understanding that artists' professional identities are flexible, ambiguous, and contextual negotiations, certainly influenced by art schooling, and, as discussed further next, also blended through past, present, and future identifications, that are melded with myths, and potential freedoms.

2.4
Artistic Identities, Myths, & Freedoms

It is almost impossible to introduce the theme of visual artists' identities without discussing artistic myths and freedoms. They are inseparably entangled, informing and shaping each other. In this section, though I present them independently, I highlight and discuss their interconnections. First, I define the terms I use around artistic identity, some of which I have already used in chapter one and above. Following this, I discuss why identity surfaces so predominantly as a topic in this research, defining its contextual backdrop. After, I position historical and current notions of artistic myth, and its influence on concepts discussed in this study. Finally, I situate the intersecting facet of artistic freedoms, outlining the kinds of freedoms considered in this study and extant theories I employ in analysing its occurrence.

2.4.1 Artistic Identities

2.4.1.1 Terms

In this section I explain my use of the terms identity, self, and self-concept. I delineate what identity work means for the artists in this study, an association I develop understanding of through this thesis, particularly its negotiation through art schooling. After, I discuss how identity became a core category in this research which led to my findings of multiple artist identifications defined through their higher art education. In line with social constructivist thought, in which I position my thesis (discussed further in the next chapter), I consider notions of identity and self not to be the sole endeavour nor exclusive property of the individual, but the culmination of varying degrees of social construction (Vygotsky, 1978; Erikson, 1959, 1986). Indeed, I acknowledge identities are co-constructions of intersecting elements, including discourse (Foucault, 1972; Burr, 1995; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006), institutions (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000), critical education (Archakis & Tsakona, 2012; Kaplan & Flum, 2012), narratives of occupations (J. Taylor, 2008), capitalist ideologies (Moran, 2015), and myth (Soussloff, 1997; Bain, 2005).

I recognise identity as a 'person's location in social life' (Hewitt, 1994, in J. Taylor, 2008:vii), composed of a 'personal identity, which gives a sense of separateness and differentiation', and a 'social identity, which involves belonging to groups and communities and identifying with them' (J. Taylor, 2008:vii). There are also national

and cultural identities which are entangled with cultural narratives and available discourses (Burr, 1995), informed by shared histories and myths, and relativised through national, international, and cultural policy (DeVereaux & Griffin, 2013). Within identities, 'the self' is understood to be 'the core, reflexive part of identity' (Hewitt, 1994, in J. Taylor, 2008:ix), made up of the 'qualities, attributes and values' (ibid.) that people consider theirs and raise towards a 'private sense of personal continuity' (Gover & Gavelek, 1996, in J. Taylor, 2008:ix). However, the notion of consistent identities and selves over time is not necessarily *actual*, but are considered to only ever be *perceived* as such (Gecas, 1982:24), and memory bares significant influence over the stability of these perceptions. Given that I asked artists to recall historical experiences, memory is an influential factor in this research. For example, in chapter six memory underscores my analysis of the artists' coping strategies around magnitudes of disappointment post art school. The entanglement of one's identity and self with recollections are also understood as temporally located (Klein, 2013:69) and situated around invented and imagined possibilities (Tykocinski & Steinberg, 2015:557). Indeed, descriptions of the self-concept, that is, 'one's theory about oneself' (Lee & Oyserman, 2012:1) that I align with, embody this idea, considering it to encompass 'the person one was in the past, is now, and can become in the future, including social roles and group memberships' (ibid). This definition draws on the concept of *Possible Selves* (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Lee & Oyserman, 2012), that I develop through this study by extending it to also consider artists' *impossible selves*, that I found to be influenced by their art school experiences.

I take identities, selves, and self-concepts not to be fixed or static, but as fluid, personal, social, and temporal constructions. The individual and collective activity in these processes can be considered identity work, which involves 'the continual negotiation and renegotiation of subjectivities' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:17). I extend this to include ongoing co-negotiations, de/reconstructions, and recoveries. The notion of identity work somewhat implies a level of agentic capacity, that one's identity can be worked on, and that self-awareness of a particular identity is necessary in the first place for it to be worked upon. Indeed, as early as Vasari's (1987[1550]) study into Renaissance artists, self-awareness was understood as a contingent part of one's self-concept as an artist (see Zanti, 2015). Identity work is also understood to occur in

specific locations. The workplace is a predominant site because work 'involves us in close relations with other people and gives us our sense of identity' (Thomas, 1999, in Bain, 2005:26-27). However, as noted earlier, this is contested in the case of artists, due to less conventional relationships with employment and the workplace (Bain, 2005; Orr & Shreeve, 2018). Another significant location for identity work for artists is through education, and art schools are considered key sites (Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Becker, 1982), especially, as noted above, for professional identity work (Orr & Shreeve, 2018). I continue discussing these themes next when considering identity's significance in this study and situating its theoretical framework.

2.4.1.2 Why Identity?

Identity recurs as a central theme throughout the following chapters, arrived at through my interpretations of what the artists said. I also consider this to be relative to the heightened occurrence of identity as a popular topic of contemporary thinking, motivation, and action (see Moran, 2015). A vernacular that is understood to have barely existed half a century ago (ibid.), it now prevails through the (Western) capitalist neoliberal agenda (ibid.), meaning, wherever that exists, there are interconnected projections, exploitations, and also analyses of identity. Some of the early shaping of that vernacular stemmed from Erving Goffman's (1956) dramatisation of identity, that was analogously positioned and understood as the performative activity of a situated self. Goffman's legacy has influenced studies I consider throughout this research (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Charmaz, 2006; Lindemann, 2014), specifically around socially constructed identities shaped through dialogue and scripted interactions between actors, their stages, backstages, and audiences. This thinking has informed understanding of specific aspects of identity, including the performance of gender (Butler, 1990), seen to come at a time when 'identities were analyzed as being socially and historically contingent' (Meyerhoff, 2015). Particular circumstances continue to bear influence on interest around identity, and the backdrop to this study is notable as social media capitulates identity and the self(ie) to the forefront of everyday lives. The constant demand for self-based content as a requirement of digital interactions means identity concerns today are considered even more complex (Cover, 2015), also affecting their position in this study.

Interpretations of identities exist across most facets of being human, not limited to, age, race, gender, sexuality or disability, as well as nationalities, cultures, and institutional allegiances. They also span many disciplines, including psychology, psychoanalysis, sociology, ethnography, and narrative theory (see Benwell & Stokoe, 2006:5). Indeed, alongside cultural theory, to examine identity as a core category in this study, I refer to a range of socio-psychological research throughout, including Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000, 2008), Bandura (1977, 2001, 2008), Markus and Nurius (1986), Oyserman and Lee (2012), and Oyserman et al. (2017). However, identity's ubiquity has drawn criticism, with some considering it not a new concept, and its prevalence in academic study is thought to render it unremarkable, occluding notions that identities have always existed (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, cited in Moran, 2015). This historical existence of identity is contested by Moran (2015), who considers it a product of capitalism, that did not 'exist or operate as a shared and cultural idea until the 1960s' (ibid.:3), and in particular, that 'personal identity' did not emerge until the 'explosion of consumption' under the 'cultural economy of the capitalist societies in which it came to prominence' (ibid.:4). Elsewhere, in identity theory, focus lies on the stability of identities, and seemingly unstable ones are often centralised in discussion (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Lindemann, 2014; Piazza & Fasulo, 2015), with some positing that while many public identities might exist as social constructions, there is an essential stable core identity (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). I do not hold the idea that artists have, or aspire to, a singular or constant authentic self that constitutes 'the' artist identity. Rather, through my research I present plural identities that converge and oscillate between opposing, occluding, competing, motivating, and harmonising, while co-existing in symbiosis with and through the others.

My focus on identity acknowledges its theoretical weight and historical context. As well, it stems from my research topic and methodological approach. The former because art schools are, as noted, significant sites of identity work (Taylor & Littleton, 2012, Orr & Shreeve, 2018), where novices are encouraged to trial different professional identities (Nicolini & Roe, 2014), in environments that focus on pursuing 'student's individual version' of that (Orr & Shreeve, 2019:81). Furthermore, not overlooking art school's institutional requirements, operating within the higher education system and interconnected 'art machine' (Rodner & Thompson, 2013:16),

that demands and relies on particular identities being fed into it. Regarding the influence of my methodological approach, I found identity because of what the artists talked about in their interviews, and through my process of analysing what I considered most relevant to them. I detail my methodology in the next chapter, however, in brief, identity surfacing was influenced by my positioning, questioning, and analysis, as well as their positions and answers, and our being bound by social constructs and subjectivities that are influenced by the popularity of identities and selves that are at the forefront of everyday lives, and the particular life experiences under discussion. To understand the role of the interview dynamic a little further here as influencing the foregrounding of identity, I refer to Oyserman et al.'s (2017:140) idea that 'what constitutes the "me" aspect of the self is not stable but created in moment-to-moment situations', in line with thinking that identities are temporally located (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998), a concept I centralise throughout the following chapters. As well, I consider the influence of wanting to act congruently (Lee & Oyserman, 2012), foregrounded in chapter four as a motivating factor. Projecting what feels like a particular self as a reflective aspect of one's identity is significantly raised through the interview situation, related to the idea that 'issues of authenticity most often come into play when authenticity has been put in doubt' (Peterson, 2005, cited in Vannini & Williams, 2009:9). In my direct questioning of the artists' experiences of art school and specifically of professional development[30], their (professional) identities were questioned. In reaction, they projected and performed various aspects of these and others for me. Identity manifests as a central topic because identity work is an ongoing process, of which the interviews can also be understood a form of. The artists (re)positioned, (re)established, and (re)situated themselves during their conversations with me that were centred on a time in their lives in which significant identity work was carried out within the institutional frame of the art school. Artists' identities and identity work also have other influences, including the discourses and myths that surround them, which I outline next.

[30] Question three of my interview questions was: *Currently we see a lot of discussion about personal and professional development related to art schools. Do you have an opinion on this? What was your experience of this?*

2.4.2 Artistic Myths

A key area of understanding this study expands upon is the influence of artistic myths on artists' experiences, practices, lives, and identities. According to Bain (2005:27-28), whose study on Canadian visual artists connects artistic myths and artists' professional identities, 'myths are constantly regenerated and sustained in the present by individuals and groups seeking legitimacy from continuity with a meaningful past'. She continues,

> As stories drawn from history, myths condense key traditions and experiences into legends that over many generations become 'bases of universal rules of understanding and conduct' (Slotkin, 1985: 19). History…is a valuable resource in both individual and collective identification.
>
> (ibid.)

In this context, it is perhaps understandable that the artists' identities I found most significantly portrayed by the participants, can be linked to mythic images of artists. Here I outline both historical and current contexts of what that image is, influential myths, and who and what shapes them.

2.4.2.1 Myths' Milieus

Often, myths represent artists as charismatic (Røyseng et al. 2007), or through a 'myth-binary' of the genius/starving artist (Wesner, 2018). These images distinguish and revere artists for their special creative talents, that are frequently considered preordained, God-given, or mystically ascribed innate traits (Kris & Kurz, 1979 [1934]). These notions leave the educating/skilling of artists through art schools in a somewhat 'paradoxical position' (Mangset 2004, cited in Røyseng et al. 2007:2). Though art schools are often understood to endorse and nurture talent, and are considered 'important arenas in which to be socialised in, concerning the position as an artist' (Røyseng et al. 2007:2), being 'educated' is also thought to 'damage artistic talent or creative genius' (ibid.), impairing myths of innate aptitude. In this study I develop understanding of myths perpetuated through art schooling. Specifically, I explore the role of luck and of certain freedoms around *only*[31] making art, and connect particular forms of socialisation related to myth that the artists experienced.

[31] Only making, or the artists' seeking 'to *Only*' as it is later referred to, is a key finding discussed in this study. Introduced here, it is developed in chapters four and seven in relation to motivation and freedom.

The long tradition of artistic myth begins with proclamations of artists' autonomy, exceptional freedoms, and separateness from the rest of society. This has been positioned as stemming from 15th century Florence (Bourdieu, 1993), when artists gained the right to 'legislate within their own sphere - that of form and style - free from subordination to religious or political interests' (ibid.:113). The influence of the Romantic era is also emphasised, as a time 'which sought to separate art from the rational and instrumental demands of the new commercial society' (Banks, 2010:3), where 'individuality', represented through special creative talent, was seen as 'an ideal for the civilized world' (Abbing, 2004:2). Later, the Realist and Naturalist eras take on the cause (Willette, 2010) in which artists' roles become teleological to socialist aims, and they are anticipated to be 'a critic of his or her own time…a prophet for humanity' (ibid.). Myths continue to have social significance and are understood as constructed, yet flexible representations of socialised order and compliance (Hawthorne, 2006). I find they also offer modes of resistance too. Some stress myths' malleability, that they are 'created and re-created as a part of continuous meaning-making processes' of which 'the content and interpretation…is not necessarily stable over time or identical in different contexts' (Røyseng et al., 2007:2). Significantly, when considered as discursive strategies (Hawthorne, 2006) that are culturally (and institutionally) de/reconstructed, it becomes imperative to gain an understanding of myths' impact on artists from artists' themselves, which I foreground through my analysis in this study.

Notably, the mythic artist has been formulated in the image of androcentric idealism (Hawthorne, 2006). The artist-genius, charismatic, and starving artist, has always been and mostly continues to be decisively male, and furthermore, is more highly and unequally valued as such. A recent example of this being two concurrent 2018 exhibitions of Pablo Picasso and Joan Jonas at Tate Modern, where Tate deemed the male 'genius' of 'the 20th century's most influential artist' (Tate, 2020a) as 40% more expensive to experience at £25 entry compared to £15 (see Soboleva, 2018). This also demonstrates the speculative value in perpetuating myths and Tate's instrumental role in this as an institution of the 'art machine' (Rodner & Thompson, 2013:16) that ensures the accumulative value of their collections (Vishmidt, 2011) and of artists' works(/brands) more widely. Myth's androcentricity is a concern also highlighted

elsewhere (Soussloff, 1997; Bain, 2005), directly challenged by exposures of myth's paternalistic alignment under a feminist lens (Hawthorne, 2006). I recognise the significance of a feminist philosophy of myth such as Hawthorne's (2006), to understand and de/reconstruct systems of power that dominate through myth. There is also perhaps a need to take an egalitarian and/or queer perspective, as per Alexander's (2017:276) positioning of a queer approach that signifies 'resistance', 'subversion', 'appropriation', 'recuperation', 'denaturalising', and 'indeterminacy'. While this study is not positioned within feminist or queer paradigms, discussed further in the methodology chapter, I acknowledge the influence of paternalistic and normative social constructions of artistic myths and thus identities, addressing this where the artists raised this, as well as engaging with injustices, inequality, (dis)inclination, and (in)action, also effected by myth.

Myths occupy an undeniably socio-political position today, often seen as societies' 'idealized perspectives' (Bain, 2005:42) or 'symbolic representations' (Hawthorne, 2006) of mutable societal power dynamics. They are understood to shift as social influences change (Kris & Kurz, 1979[1934]; Soussloff, 1997; Røyseng et al., 2007). Moreover, due to this socio-political alignment, myths are apt to undergo change; what I call de/re-mythification. I situate this term in chapter six, and further analyse its importance in the artists' stories in chapter seven. It describes myth making, maintenance, and dissemination, and the processes of deliberate and incidental acts of dismantling/reframing particular myths carried out by the artists. The 'de' part acknowledges my findings which show active and unforeseen dismantling, and the 're' part recognises that artists are myth magnets, meaning that in attempting to dismantle one myth, another sticks. The effects of artistic myths on artists are broad ranging, and shown in this study to be both motivating and impeding. Elsewhere, some are considered to be specifically utilised by artists to develop their careers (Wesner, 2018), as a kind of 'functional institution' (Menger, 1989, cited in Røyseng et al. 2007:3) in itself which belief in can bolster confidence and purpose, as well as 'control insecurity' (ibid.). In this study I foreground listening to artists' experiences and analysing their active role in making and shaking the myths that affect them. This process centralises what is important to them, which is key to developing informed cultural policy that fosters better support for artists' practices, education, and careers. These topics are

discussed further in chapter eight, while here, I outline common myth makers and shakers.

2.4.2.2 Myth Makers & Shakers

Myth makers, influencers, or 'messengers' (Wesner, 2018) exist across philosophical, sociological, and critical theory. They generate, maintain, and alter the anecdotes (Soussloff, 1997) and ideologies that inform myths, and vice versa. From Kant's artistic genius (1987[1790]), to Marx and Engel's omission of a fully formed aesthetic theory implying art's difference (Werckmeister, 1973; Graham, 1997), Horkheimer and Adorno's (1992[1944]) focus on myth as an opposition to the rational thought processes of the Enlightenment (Liatsos, 2001), and Barthes' (1957) mythic signs and signifiers as reflections of society. These theorists are all considerable myth makers, especially Kant (1987[1790]), whose conception of the artist-genius became revered as the only individual to create aesthetic ideas (Daichendt, 2012:65). Cultural institutions also significantly influence mythification, perpetuating ideas of artists' as geniuses (exemplified above) or as disobedient radicals through positioning art schools as sites for 'rebellious ideas' or spaces 'to break rules' (V&A, 2020, *Friday Late: Art Schooled*). As well, topping UNESCO's (2020) criteria list for inclusion as a World Heritage site, is that it must 'represent a masterpiece of human creative genius', indicating extents to which the value of creative genius is endemically measured, extorted, and rewarded, and considered feasible/possible to do so. Such elevations of creative genius are contentious. They imbue exultations of special talent that are founded on and maintain inequalities of participation, in particular inhibiting access to HAE for those lacking certain economic, social, or cultural capital (Banks, 2017). UNESCO, and others, risk mimicking these selection imbalances, while nurturing and perpetuating a myth that feeds into a system of inequality. As well as genius, the artistic characteristic of creativity itself is also co-opted, capitulated, and exploited in business (see Devin (2003) *Artful Making: What Managers Need to Know About How Artists Work*, cited in Shiner, 2012), or translated into commodifiable brand management opportunities that deliberately 'resonates with a target "myth market" (Holt, 2004)' (Scarpaci et al., 2018:321). A 'myth market' being one which trades in myths and ideologies over products, and awards winners with iconic status (Holt, 2003). Iconic

status however, is not necessarily one's chosen status and, as discussion demonstrates in this study, is difficult for artists to navigate in daily life.

As well as mythification carried out by those outlined above who make, perpetuate and disseminate myth, in cultural theory, de/re-mythification also has a place. Many critiques displace and deliberately dismantle certain myths ascribed to artists, and simultaneously create new ones. For example, Becker (1982) corrupts the idea of the individual sole producer, instead positioning art making as a social activity. Elsewhere, Bourdieu (1993), who conceptualised 'economic reversal', proposes that artists' refusals of economic need/compliance, as well as claims to artistic autonomy, are in fact made to gain cultural power (see Toynbee, 2013), which in turn aids economic return. However, these discourses are also critiqued elsewhere, and more complex relationships with finances are highlighted (see Vishmidt, 2011, and Taylor & Littleton, 2012). Other studies offer in-depth assessments of the way myths are formed and endured by a range of players including cultural theorists and artists themselves (Kris & Kurz, 1979[1934]; Soussloff, 1997; Røyseng, 2007; Wesner, 2018). There is also critique of cultural theory's handling and employment of myth as being a somewhat sceptical way to view the situation (Toynbee, 2013). However, I would argue that utilising the lens of myth to see this phenomenon through, is not a sceptical attempt to call these ideologies fictional. Rather, it is to critique and redress imbalances in opportunity and oppressive systems that perpetuate myth to domineering ends, such as UNESCO's (2020) selection criteria (Nas, 2002; Keough, 2011), systemic government precarisation (see Lorey, 2015), or raising exhibition prices depending on (immeasurable) levels of 'genius'. Finally, I recognise that I too am a myth maker and shaker through my interpretations of the experiences of the artists I interviewed, as well as my entangled experience. I recall, reposition, and reframe myths in my wider untangling of the mutable, malleable myths that are surfaced throughout this research. Next, I outline the parameters of the artists' freedoms, and entanglements with myth and identity that are discussed in the thesis.

2.4.3 Artistic Freedoms

Freedom is an extensive topic, and is especially revered in the case of artists. Here, I first briefly outline some concepts of freedom, and of common discourses of artistic

freedoms. After, I situate this study's focus on the freedoms the artists discussed as important to them, and the extant theory I refer to that stems from this core category. I analyse these freedoms through Arendt's (1958, 1961) theories to understand what the artists said as speech acts, qualifying their pluralised assertions as potential realisers of their freedoms. I also consider Foucault's (1997[1984]) theories to position these acts as practices of freedom. Throughout the findings chapters the artists' relationships with different freedoms are explored, and are discussed as a core category in chapter seven. I position these shortly, after outlining philosophical frames of freedom.

2.4.3.1 Philosophies of Freedom

Whether one was, is, or can ever be 'free' has dominated philosophical discussion for centuries. Questions of freedom have considered both deterministic influences of social structures, and the capacities of an individual's free will and agency. Debate has centred on rational choice thinking that our 'environment will make sufficient options available for people to have choices' (Petit, 2001:2-4). Whereas, others have considered the parameters, dimensions, and situations of an agents' freedom to enact free will, and whether this is/can be voluntarily so, or not (see Locke, 1690, cited in Rickless, 2020). One of the most influential periods to engender this thinking is understood to be the Enlightenment, which saw the fundamental 'invention of the individual as a 'free agent' able to make rational choices' (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998:964). New ideas around this came from philosopher and physician John Locke (1689, 1690), whose concept of agency 'affirmed the capacity of human beings to shape the circumstances in which they live' (ibid.:965). Later the Romantics, including Rousseau and Kant, expanded this conception of agency and freedom, considering its association with 'rational self-interest', 'transcendental imagination', 'instrumental reason', and 'self-legislating morality' (ibid.). Following these ideas, Talcott Parson's (1968) concepts of action as having a temporal dimension became influential, in which agency, free will, and freedom were influenced by the idea that, 'choices are imagined, evaluated, and contingently reconstructed by actors in ongoing dialogue with unfolding situations' (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998:966). These positions have led to the notion that I recognise in this study, that agency is a 'temporally embedded process of social engagement' situated in the 'flow of time' (ibid.:963).

When discussing artists in particular, the notion of 'freedom' has a long history, and is deeply interconnected with myths and identities. Artistic freedom both defines, and is defined by, multiple narrated and mythologised identities impressed upon artists through discourse over time (a notion at the heart of Foucault's (1972) theories). The figure of the solo artist perpetuated in myth (Bain, 2005), is consistently distinguished from the rest of society in their supposed liberation (Kris & Kurz, 1979 [1934]), and mythologised isolation is synonymised with freedom from adherence to societal rules (Bain, 2005), connected to artists being cast as dissenting rebels, free from (or freeing themselves from) constraints (Becker, 1963, 1982). Their creativity has been idealised as emancipatory (Kant, 1987[1790]), and their creative work described as the 'domain of liberty' (Durkheim, 1997[1893]), equated with independence and being less boundaried than other types of work. Creativity is still positioned in the liberal domain, posited as inherently 'free' and constituting an act of free will (Simonton, 2013). Although, today, this concept is often muddled with artists' freelance/self-employed status, which should not be confused with freedom in work. This construct is also somewhat mythologised itself, where 'the ideal of liberal individual freedom has effectively been replaced by a capitalist form of entrepreneurialism' (Pendrell & Trafford, 2017) that 'prevents the "precariat" [/artists]…from forming collective political agency' (ibid.). In this study, when I discuss the artists' practices of freedom, I do not suggest they are aimed towards artificial liberties ascribed to freelance workers. Rather, I highlight how the educational institutions artists attend perpetuate the urgency of certain freedoms. In chapter five, and analysed further in chapter seven, I foreground structureless pedagogies' entanglement with myths of artists having, or being bestowed, the freedom to *only* make. I position tensions caused by this as a critical in the artists' development that I highlight in this thesis, also extending understanding of special affordances given to artists (see Kris & Kurz, 1979 [1934]) that are influenced by mythologised freedoms. Notions of artistic freedom are foregrounded through these artistic myths.

2.4.3.2 What Freedoms?

I do not position artists as 'free', nor any more liberated members of society than others. This becomes clear through my foregrounding of the precariousness, marginalisation, and inequalities experienced by the artists that highlight specific compromises to their

so-called freedoms. Rather, in recognising the differences between 'freedom *from*, freedom *to* and freedom *as*' (Whelan & Ryan, 2018:51), the artists' freedoms are positioned as freedoms *from* marginalising pedagogies and dominant myths felt to be impeding, *to* pursue creative immersion and their capacity to study and make art, and *as* self-determination, self-definition, self-regulation, and relative autonomy. In particular, through the findings chapters I outline actions and assertions towards self-determination, self-regulation, and self-ledness, all facets of self-production and finite freedoms, which, through chapter seven's analysis, I term profound-reified-autonomies. In my discussions I consider both philosophical and psychological theory, connecting relationships between artists' freedoms, myths, identities, and art schooling. In particular I refer to psychology when discussing links between the artists' freedoms and their motivations and identities. For example, Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2000, 2008) Self-Determination Theory is raised when I consider the artists' needs around competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Though sometimes critiqued for positioning binary views on intrinsic/extrinsic influences (see Lourenço, 2017), and its distilling of human needs into the three aforementioned categories (there are others who find many more needs - Maslow (1943) and Murray (1938) for example), it offers a rich lens to consider some of the artists' motivations connected to freedom. As well, I refer to Bandura's (1977, 1994, 2001, 2008) theories of agency and self-efficacy, in discussing the artists' motivations and their capacities for adapting post art school. I also utilise the works of psychologist Daphna Oyserman, in particular her research around possible identities, relating this to the artists' acts of congruence towards self-determination. Along with these I refer to Ricœur's (1950) ideas on relative finite freedoms, and Foucault's theories to consider the emotional relevance of different practices of freedom as interconnected with a 'care of the self' (Foucault 1997[1984], cited in Rabinow, 1997). The artists' emotions are a key facet of this study that I foreground as being intimately intertwined with their identities, myths, and the freedoms they have been, and are motivated towards in relation to art schooling. In combination these theories offer a rich theoretical lens through which to consider the artists' relationships with different types of freedoms I found resulted from their art schooling.

2.5
Conclusion

Through this chapter I situate and connect the themes and core categories I present in this study within extant theory, in the wider debates of professional development and art school pedagogies, artistic identities, myths, and freedoms. How my work differs from existing research is highlighted, and which concepts I develop further through my research are indicated. I set the scene by outlining a brief history of UK art schools, defining dominant political ideologies under which they have continued to be placed. Policies that have affected them are situated as determining their teleological positions in meeting government aims and providing training of individuals for industry; whether plugging deficits in numbers of designers, or meeting employability and enterprise agendas. As well, influential people, governments and their policies are distinguished that have affected the *Professional Curriculum* (Houghton, 2016) through the strategic embedding of professional pedagogies. This is acknowledged as occurring most significantly since the 1960s, and with increasing force under neoliberal agendas during the past thirty years when this study is set.

I outline the lineage of professionalisation in UK art schools, of how they became institutionalised into universities, and how the arts as a profession, as well as professional identification, relates to today's professional artists, supporting the core category of professionalisation in this study. In recognising the interconnected relationship between professions and institutions, I also discern the backdrop against which the arts and artists have been considered professions and professionals for many years. Additionally, I outline the changing understanding of professional identities, and distinguish a definition I apply for artists' professional identities throughout this study. This encompasses not only social prestige and education, but a persons' sense of professional self-concept, based in past, present, and future possible (and impossible) selves (Oyserman et al., 2017) that are negotiated through institutions as well as aspirations, expectations, and one's social background (Dubar, 2000, in Paquette, 2012:10).

Lastly, I outline the theoretical frames for three further core categories, that of identity, myth, and freedom. I define terms I employ around identity and outline locations of artists' identity work. When reasoning its prevalence in this study I situate the history

of identity as a current concept (Moran, 2015) related to digital and consumer cultures, also referring to my methodological approach. Its entanglement with myth is discussed through outlining the overlaps of both as discursive social strategies (Hawthorne, 2006) shaped through dominant social powers and policies (Bain, 2005; Røyseng, 2007). In particular, artistic myth is further detailed through defining prominent myth makers; institutions, organisations and individuals whose interest or situation appears to be in de/re-mythification. I also outline the influence and intersection of artistic freedom. Entangled with myth and identity, I define the types of freedoms I discuss in the following chapters that the artists in this study were preoccupied with, and which were perpetuated through art schooling and art schooled myths, including self-determination, self-regulation, self-ledness, and what I later analyse and term as profound-reified-autonomies.

My research into artists' experiences and perspectives of art schooling and professional development 1986-2016 is situated alongside the political context of UK HAE. It relates to the positioning of the arts and artists as professions/professionals, and the historical situation of artists' identities, the stories and myths that made them, and the entangled (im)possible freedoms that shape and motivate them. Through this chapter I have positioned this research within the current debates in these key areas that have inspired and form the backdrop to this study, and which I refer to and expand understanding of throughout. Next, I detail the methodology I used to carry out this research.

Chapter Three

3. METHODOLOGY

The Coding Cave and the Performative Fishbowl

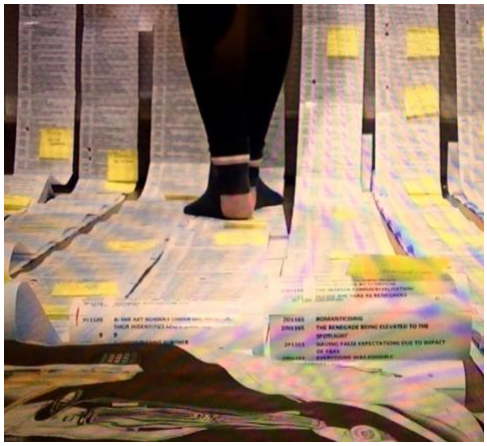

Figure 2: Analysis in Action (Scarsbrook, 2018)

3.1

Introduction

In this chapter I detail and review my approach to this study that uses Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM), and applies GTM and arts-based/informed methods. Through this research I depict the experiences and views of twelve artists who attended London art schools during the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, using GTM as 'an analytic lens that focuses and sharpens our views of these experiences' (Charmaz, 2006:151). Before outlining the contents of this chapter, I foreground my research perspective, and briefly address preconception and theoretical agnosticism, underscoring the basis of my approach.

I follow an interpretivist paradigm through which I focus on 'recognizing and narrating the meaning of human experiences and actions' (Fossey et al., 2002, cited in Levers, 2013:3). My perspective assumes that 'being' (my ontology) is relative and 'knowing' (my epistemology) is subjective and partial. This way of thinking fitted with my wanting to embark on a qualitative explorative study that would use an interpretivist methodology such as GTM, which was also flexible enough for me to incorporate art

practices (Charmaz, 2000; Pace, 2012; Birks & Mills, 2015). I neither had a predefined framework, nor a hypothesis driving the study, fitting with the premise that 'grounded theory research does not start with a theory to prove or disprove' (Urquhart & Fernandez, 2006:460). Rather than being a 'blank slate' (ibid.), that was a historical (albeit impossible) requisite of GTM researchers (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Urquhart & Fernandez, 2006), I practiced the kind of 'theoretical agnosticism' that Charmaz et al. (2017:414) highlight as taking 'a critical view toward extant theoretical explanations while remaining open to all kinds of theoretical possibilities'. Hence the positioning chapter I have just presented in lieu of a literature review. In the first instance, as outlined in chapter one, I mapped out my topic by engaging with existing research and primary material from art schools, led by the question; what are artists' experiences and views of their undergraduate fine art education and encounters of professional development in London art schools?[32]

In section 3.2, I outline why and how I use GTM for this study, detailing my particular approach to GTM that blends meaning making through/with art practice, discussing arts-based/informed[33] research (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014; Butler-Kisber, 2018), and self-reflexive, 'diffractive', and 'intra-active' (Barad, 2007) approaches. In section 3.3, I detail the study's design and data collection methods. I review my sample and my use of semi-structured interviews and their impact on the study, the development of interview questions, participant recruitment and demography, and 'in/post' interview processes. Section 3.4 covers my analysis, that in GTM is carried out concurrently with data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I describe and critique the qualitative data coding (QDC) methods, apparatuses, and approaches I made and used, also considering their limitations. I review the different types of codes I applied during the first 'Open' cycle of QDC, and outline how I approached and analysed through the second 'Axial', and third 'Selective' coding cycles, as well as considering a fourth cycle, that of 'writing-up-as-analysis'. Analytic memoing, which I extend to

[32] As noted in chapter two, initial mapping was not carried out as a literature review prior to research being conducted, as is usual (Dunne, 2011). Extant theory considered in the thesis was led by my findings upon analysing and developing categories.

[33] There are differences in opinion over the use of the terms 'arts-informed' and 'arts-based research'. Butler-Kisber (2018) highlights that, 'arts-informed stemmed from the fact that as educational researchers [those who coined the term] were using art to inform their research, rather than basing it on art'. Though this is useful, I find that, as discussed shortly, there are overlaps between 'based' and 'informed' so acknowledgements of both are included in the term I use; arts-based/informed research.

Analytic Memoing & Materialising (AMM), is explained, detailing the integrated material and performative arts-based/informed methods I developed within the framework of GTM, and how I made meaning through them. In section 3.5, to conclude, I consider the unifying effects of my incorporating arts practice, and what my particular approach means for the study and GTM.

3.2
Why & How Grounded Theory Methodology?

3.2.1 Choosing GTM

I chose to use GTM due to my perspectival alignment with its interpretivist association today that fitted the type of study I wanted to conduct. This was to investigate and understand artists' experiences and views of their undergraduate fine art education with a focus on professional development. I wanted to design a study to foreground artists' voices, to speak with them and explore the meaning of what they would tell me, to uncover and analyse underlying aspects of what they would say, finding different and new stories through this approach, which does not take for granted, but questions knowledge. GTM is known for enabling and producing this kind of interpretation (Charmaz, 2006), by using an adaptable set of methods to investigate qualitative data collected first hand from participants.

Significant versions of GTM exist (Birks & Mills, 2015:3), so it is important to clarify which I align with. It originated in 1967 as a post-positivist, social scientific methodology, designed by Barney Glaser and Anslem Strauss, for carrying out in-depth qualitative studies and the development of theory, to 'shift the sociological focus from theory verification to theory generation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)' (Plummer & Young, 2010:306). Its post-positivist beginnings lie in the combination of Glaser's positivist and Strauss's pragmatist roots (Charmaz, 2006:7), differing from non-positivist in that there were underlying beliefs in objectivity in what is now referred to as this 'classic' (Flick, 2018:14) version. GTM has evolved since to incorporate changing epistemological and ontological perspectives, led by those who use it, becoming a methodology that is framed in an interpretive paradigm today, and fitting with my perspectives and explorative approach to meaning making. Glaser and Strauss eventually split off to work on distinct versions of GTM that were closer to their

different paradigmatic stances (Charmaz, 2006:8). Strauss worked with Juliet Corbin, who had studied at the university Strauss taught at, to develop an interactionist approach based on his original pragmatist roots. Some call this 'evolved' grounded theory (Birks & Mills, 2015:2), which, after Strauss's death in 1996, Corbin continues to develop, incorporating the approaches of other versions developed since (Corbin & Strauss, 2015:25). These include, Kathy Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory, developed during the 1990s/early 2000s, embedding conceptualisation as a process of co-construction between the researcher and the researched, in which, 'research participants' implicit meanings, experiential views - and researchers' finished grounded theories - are constructions of reality', that offer, 'an *interpretive* portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it' (Charmaz, 2006:10, original emphasis). Also included is Adele Clarke's (2005) 'situational analysis' aligned with feminist philosophies, in which the researcher is de/repositioned as an '"acknowledged participant" in the production of always partial knowledges' (Clarke, 2003:555), which embedded the recognition that theories produced are fluid, contextual, and perspectival. Clarke (2009:234) positions this as an 'extension of grounded theory' rather than a 'type', which is akin to how I see my use of art practices within the GTM framework, discussed further shortly.

Throughout GTM's evolution, interpretations by different researchers are considered to have retained its 'defining characteristics' (Charmaz et al., 2017:412), of, 'minimal preconceptions about the issue under study, simultaneous data collection and analysis, using various interpretations for data, and aiming at constructing middle range theories as the outcome of the research' (Flick, 2018:3). Some consider the versions to compete (Flick, 2018), while others see making stark distinctions between the versions as less helpful, instead, seeing GTM as a methodology with 'no right or wrong approaches' (Birks & Mills, 2015:9). The subtleties and differences between the versions can be recognised by researchers who use this approach, as well as acknowledging that 'there is much to be learned from all antecedent grounded theorists' (ibid.:4). My interpretation is aligned with Charmaz's constructivist version, and influenced by elements of Clarke's, and Corbin and Strauss' later work, as well as my incorporation of art practices, discussed further next.

3.2.2 My Approach to GTM: Reflexivity, Diffractivity, & Art Practices

In qualitative research it was considered that 'one must either be "scientific" or "artistic"' (Cooper, 2010:998). However, instances of combined, interdisciplinary methodologies are more common today (see Richardson & St Pierre, 2018), coming from greater (though perhaps binary) understanding that we 'see more deeply using two lenses' (ibid.:824) (that of science *and* art). The combining of social scientific methods, including GTM, with arts-based/informed approaches, is certainly desirable among qualitative researchers (see Cooper 2010; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Pace, 2012; Compton & Barratt, 2016), perhaps towards embracing multiple lensed approaches encouraging the 'continuing development of critical, qualitative research methodologies' (Denzin, n.d., cited in Finley, 2017:562).

I am an artist and a researcher, using GTM to explore my research question through qualitative, interpretive, and arts-based/informed methods. As a researcher, I wanted to find out more from artists about their experiences and views of their art schooling. As an artist I wanted to work materially, and as one who studied in London during the timeframe under investigation, it was evident that I would share some of the experiences of the participants. These positions have not been mutually exclusive, rather, I have considered, challenged, and integrated my emic position through the rigours and self-confrontation that blending GTM methods with art practices has afforded me. I have used GTM as a framework for the development of creative interpretation that encompasses doing, making, drawing, speaking, filming, editing, and performing. Through this, I offer insights that add value to the findings by embedding interplaying perspectives of both the observer and the observed.

Though definitions can be slippery in practice/arts-research methodologies and paradigms (Hope, 2016; Butler-Kisber, 2018), I discern my use of art practices here as aligned with arts-based/informed approaches. I distinguish my processes of meaning making from practice-based research, that is viewed as the 'improvement of practice and new epistemologies of practice distilled from the insider's understandings of action in context' (Haseman, 2006, cited in Hope, 2016:78), or practice-led research that is seen as 'intrinsically experimental and involves the creation of new artistic forms' (ibid.). Instead, I position it alongside *arts-based*, defined as, 'the use of the artistic

process; the making and doing of art as a means of understanding experience' (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014:7), and *arts-informed*, as it 'uses the expressive qualities of form to convey meaning' (Barone & Eisner, 2012:xii, cited in Butler-Kisber, 2018:94), while being 'firmly rooted in qualitative methods' (Rolling, 2010, cited in Hope, 2016:80). Thus, I use the term arts-based/informed to describe my approach to meaning making that incorporates art practices. When making art, I adapt mediums to convey meaning in particular contexts, which facilitated this engagement with GTM.

In my interpretations made by using arts-based/informed methods with GTM, I incorporate paradigmatic elements of evolved interactionist (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), constructivist (Charmaz, 2006), and situated feminist (Clarke, 2003) versions/extensions, discussed above. All of which sit within my interpretivist approach. My incorporation of these are based on my understanding of GTM's existence as a methodology in relation to late modernity (see Giddens, 1991; Fornäs, 1995; Bauman, 2000). By consequence, GTM (and other methodologies) accommodate adaptations resulting from heightened intersubjectivity, and the collapsing of traditional methodologies and modes of critical thinking/action, that are of its time (see Fornäs, 1995). It is in this sense that I draw on multiple lenses, or 'cultures of inquiry' (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, cited in Butler-Kisber, 2018), as informing my work, not necessarily as philosophical underpinnings, these I outlined at the beginning of this chapter. My situated feminist position/approach operates on this level, as does drawing on feminist/queer/social justice theories (such as Haraway, 1991, 1997, 2016; Butler, 1996, 2004; Hawthorne, 2006; Barad, 2007; Banks, 2007, 2017; and Lindemann, 2014), that, while perhaps are not 'consistent with GT as per Glaser's perspective', it 'fits with interpretive forms of GT and promotes compassion and understanding (Charmaz, 2000)' (Plummer & Young, 2010:315). I also foster some of the principles of a 'new paradigm inquirer' (Lincoln et al. 2011), pursuing 'emancipation, democracy, and community empowerment' and 'redressing power imbalances such that those who were previously marginalized now achieve voice' (ibid.:202). My centralising and foregrounding of listening to and interpreting artists' voices is indicative of this.

I note Karen Barad's influence separately here to detail my alignment with elements of their agential realist stance that, 'knowing, thinking, measuring, theorizing, and observing are material practices of intra-acting within and as part of the world' (Barad, 2007:90). In Barad's approach, 'agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment [of] "doing" or "being"' (ibid.:178), and realism is not about a singular reality/truth, but is taken to mean the 'real consequences, interventions, creative possibilities, and responsibilities of intra-acting within and as part of the world' (ibid.:37). I embed intra-action in my processes to meet and un-muddle the 'mutual constitution of entangled agencies' (ibid.:33) that exist between myself and the participants, understanding the prefix 'intra' to constitute 'interiority, a pulling away, selecting, eliminating, and extracting; a mining of differential components from chaos' (Garoian, 2015:10). Instead of holding up a mirror to reflect the 'chaos', I adopt Barad's (2007, 2010, 2014, 2015) notion of 'diffraction' (see also Haraway, 1997). I use a diffractive lens to see the interferences between me, the participants, and the themes I find, in a 'commitment to understanding which differences matter, how they matter, and for whom', as a 'critical practice of engagement', rather than simply 'reflecting from afar' (Barad, 2007:90). Diffraction, for both Haraway and Barad, is 'being attentive to how differences get made and what the effects of these differences are' (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017:2), not in opposition to sameness, but in ways that queer these binaries (ibid.). I embed this thinking, especially through my arts-based/informed approach, which combines reflexive (surfacing sameness) and diffractive (appearing differences) elements, not in competition, but in 'reading ideas of one through another' (ibid.:7).

My approach to GTM confronts and unravels the entanglement of the participants' experiences through my emic subjectivity towards the co-construction of meaning. In this sense, 'co-'constructing meaning, as noted in chapter one, is related to my beliefs in social constructivist philosophy underlying my understanding that meaning is created between agents; in this case, between the artists and I, with their words having an effect on my thinking, and vice versa. In this way, my findings move away from singularities, towards polyvocal pluralised knowing. I recognise the artists projected 'a particular persona against the backdrop of a given situation' (Lindemann, 2014:99), shaped by their individual social worlds, the questions I asked, what I represent and offer as an art schooled artist with 'insider' status (see Pezalla et al., 2012), the interview setting, and

the artists' available memories/self-concepts in the moment (Conway & Loveday, 2015; Oyserman et al., 2017). As well, I recognise my perspective as partial, context-based, and situated. I made meaning through employing GTM's key critical and analytic processes, and through blending art practices with these which facilitated deeply reflexive, diffractive intra-action with my topic and the artists. This is enabled by GTM's flexibility, and my flexing of its methods through art-based/informed ones, which expand its boundaries.

3.3 The Study: Data Collection, Participants, & Process

Central to this study was wanting to foreground artists' experiences and voices; for them to tell me their stories, and for me to sensitively and critically interpret these. I collected data through semi-structured interviews with twelve artist-graduates, asking them to talk about their experiences and views of art schooling. In this section I outline my initial steps, delineating the parameters of the interviews I conducted, what questions I asked and interviewing procedure I applied. As well, I give details on the sample, the participants and their recruitment, my 'in' and 'post' interview processes, and theoretical sampling that is key to GTM.

3.3.1 Ethics & Pseudonymisation

To proceed with my research involving people, Ethics Committee approval was necessary. For this, an Information Sheet[34] explaining what participation would entail, a Consent Form outlining participant privacy and requesting a signature consenting to participation terms, and the Interview Questions, though developed separately, were submitted, and approved (see Appendix 1 & 2). Providing privacy was fostered through pseudonymisation to encourage open conversation, as an understood aspect of people feeling able to engage freely (see Whelan & Ryan, 2018). This was in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (European Parliament and Council, 2016) guidelines, using approved pseudonymisation practices to protect the privacy of the participants via a reference code and number when quoting or referring to them. For

[34] In my Information Sheet, I note that I had wanted to make an essay-film using audio material from the interviews along with collected visual material. This film has not been completed, for several reasons, time being one, and also the consideration of what it would add to this study. As becomes evident later in this chapter, I made a different film, aligned with the meaning making of my processes.

example *P1:203-207* in the thesis text refers to what participant one said on lines 203-207 of the coded interview transcript. This assures, 'personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information' (ibid.). All information is also securely stored with password protections so participant's 'personal data are not attributed to an identified or identifiable natural person' (ibid.).

3.3.2 The Sample, Interviews, & Question Development

Charmaz (2006:28) notes that 'both grounded theory methods and intensive interviewing are open-ended yet directed, shaped yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted'. Referring to this, I decided to carry out semi-structured interviews, providing some structure through certain questions to initiate responses within the same areas of each participant's experiences of art schooling. I opted for an open-ended timeframe, differing from similar studies[35] (see Orr et al., 2014), to encourage the artists to take time to answer the questions, focus on what they wanted, and for a conversation to unfold, even if semi-structured through some specific questions. On average each interview lasted around two hours, the shortest being just over an hour, and the longest three and a half hours. Together, I collected around twenty-two hours of data from twelve interviews. While this sample could be considered a small, it is commensurate with GTM studies in which data is 'often obtained from a relatively small number of sources' (Birks & Mills, 2015:38) (for example Feeler, 2012; Latham, 2013; Whalen, 2016), because sample sizes are 'contingent on the evolving theoretical categories' (Vasileiou et al. 2018) which are developed through concurrent data collection, analysis, and theoretical sampling, discussed further shortly. Once I had amalgamated sufficient categories through these processes to reach a point of saturation (where no further categories will be found through further data collection (see Flick 2009:428)), I had interviewed twelve participants, echoing other studies in which saturation occurs around this number with 'homogenous groups' (Guest et al., 2006), such as the London art school graduates I interviewed.

To develop the questions I used, I interviewed myself first. I began using the recording and transcription of this to make a film, for which I had wanted to incorporate interview

[35] Orr et al.'s (2014) study carried out semi-structured interviews with third year undergraduate art and design students with a time cap of 45 minutes, to 'promote participation' (ibid.:34).

data from participants (noted in the Information Sheet and footnote 34, p.67). Though this remains a work-in-progress, it was not the only intended outcome of the self-interview. I used it to sharpen my position and perspective of my art school experiences, questioning myself on this before I spoke with others. The recording, transcript and my understanding gained from this were utilised to adapt questions accordingly, also following GTM processes where interview questions are 'derived from analysis of the first interview' (Corbin & Strauss, 2015:241), and underscoring the performative aspect of my approach, discussed further shortly.

The questions I developed were open but focussed to stimulate deep conversations, engendering discussion on the artists' experiences and views of art schooling, particularly of professional development, to uncover their stories. I asked:

1. Why did you go to art school and why did you choose that particular one?
2. What was it like being at art school? What did you do?
3. Currently, we see a lot of discussion about personal and professional development related to art schools. Do you have an opinion about this? What was your experience of this?
4. What did you do following art school, and how did you go about this?
5. What did you take away from your art school experience?
6. What are you doing now?
7. If you had one wish today, what would it be?

Notably, the questions follow a chronology of life events; before, during, and after art school. Later, I noted this temporal framing as somewhat influencing my analysis and the development of my findings as a possible limitation. However, I also consider the availability of certain memories (Conway & Loveday, 2015) and self-concepts (Oyserman et al., 2017) will have influenced the artists' answers to my questions (this is notable and noted in the findings chapters, especially around the *Always & Only* subcategory and *Realisations & Romantic Notions* key category discussed in chapters four and six respectively). Accounts entangled with memories allowed me to infer interpretation (Lindemann, 2014), yet are understood as non-linearly accessible, nor performable on demand, but comprised of blended past, present, and future possible

(Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) (and impossible) selves that one seeks in the moment (Klein, 2013; Oyserman et al., 2017), and which depend on other actors in given performative scenarios (Lindemann, 2014), like an interview. However, the chronological questioning has led to the belief that due to this, the stories I have collected were roughly told in that order, and the themes drawn from the data, though fractured during analysis and not explicitly chronologically related, have been generally placed back (also during analysis, discussed in section 3.4) into categories of time in my development of the overall themes.

Elsewhere, the use of semi-structured interviews is problematised by Corbin and Strauss (2015:39) who suggest it can be 'more difficult to be certain that the issues and problems relevant to participants are covered or that concepts derived during analysis of previous interviews are followed up on'. I acknowledge this as a limitation which has influenced the construction of the themes and categories I present, and that this could be avoided by carrying out open/unstructured interviews in future studies. However, though I arrange the thesis in a chronological way that appears related to my interview questions, the order also situates the broad themes that I have found, including motivation, agency and action, and adaptation in continuum, which support the core categories of identity, myth, freedom, and professionalisation. As well, the chronological framing of the questions was opened up and largely moved away from during our conversations in the ways I followed up on the set questions I asked, and was broken down and expanded through simultaneous analysis and GTM's theoretical sampling, discussed further shortly.

I recorded the interviews on an MP3 digital voice recorder and transcribed them afterwards. Owing to time constraints and physical limitations[36] I was unable to transcribe all of the interviews myself, and enlisted a transcriber to assist with this process. In recognising the interpretive nature of transcription (see Duranti, 2006), and that transcribers apply their own meaning, for example, in the placement of punctuation to note a pause, stop, thinking process, or breath, I reviewed the transcripts alongside the recordings, double checking this against my observations of the

[36] Physical limitations at the time meant it was necessary for me to limit typing.

transcripts/recordings as well as my recollections of the interview, making adjustments accordingly.

3.3.3 Recruitment & Participant Demography

I recruited participants - London fine art BA graduates who had studied in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s - in a number of ways; through open calls on art school's social media; making and placing posters in art schools and artist studio buildings; distributing flyers at targeted events with potential participants; mining personal contacts; and lastly, emailing artists directly using information found through online searches. In part, my sample was guided by the type of person who would respond to my recruitment efforts and who wanted to tell their story. Possible issues with this approach being that the research could be skewed towards underlying motivations self-selecting people might have, such as bringing particular agendas to the interview. As an understood inevitability of researching with participants (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009), I have been unable to avoid this potentiality, however I have tackled issues around this through my analysis, being alert to this as a possible behaviour to look out for, and coding it as such.

I wanted my study to include people of varied genders, racial profiles, and socio-economic backgrounds to represent a diversity of voices. Though demographic data was not requested, through observation and self-assertion in pre-selection and interviews, my sample of twelve art graduates was predominantly evenly split as six female and six males (no one expressed being transgender or genderqueer). Ten were white, two were people of colour, and one was non-British. Six identified as working class or from low socio-economic backgrounds, and one described themselves as upper-middle class. The other five either did not state their socio-economic background or intimated they were middle class. Two were mature students. It is difficult to compare how representative my study is of undergraduate fine art student populations in London, or more widely. In my attempts, I found that demographic data-sets cover whole student bodies of universities, or broad subject disciplines such as *Creative Arts & Design* (Universities UK, 2017; HESA, 2020), rendering detailed information generally unavailable.

Table 1, below, gives further details on each participant, including to which graduate group they belong (1990s, 2000s, or 2010s) and when they graduated, how many

attended the same art schools, and an indication of how much time they were able to spend working on their art practice since graduating that they suggested during the interviews. Though I do not name the art schools directly attended, those represented in the study include Byam Shaw, Central St Martins, Chelsea College of Art, Goldsmiths, and The Slade. The participants were evenly distributed among these. While participant privacy is still protected, in giving this information themes discussed throughout the thesis are contextualised, particularly around the artists' professional identities, navigations of subemployment and teaching (in chapter six), and underlying facets of the core categories of identity and freedom.

Participant Code & Graduate Group	Details
P5 1990s	Participant five studied at Art School A, graduating in 1993. This artist has worked in London on their art practice mostly full-time among art related jobs including teaching at tertiary level since studying their BA in fine art. They make, exhibit, and sell their art work as well as writing and publishing on their experiences in the London art world.
P4 1990s	Participant four studied at Art School C, graduating in 1995. This artist worked in a non-arts related career before studying fine art as a mature student. When interviewed, they were still living in London, and studying for an MA in arts management. They had adapted their art practice since studying their BA, still making part-time, and wanting to prioritise their practice.
P9 1990s	Participant nine studied at Art School B, graduating in 1997. They had juggled working art and non-art related jobs with making their work since. They left London, but still exhibit there and elsewhere, alongside holding a senior teaching position as course leader on a fine art course in the north of England.
P6 1990s	Participant six studied at Art School D, graduating in 1998. When interviewed, this artist was studying for a practice-based PhD and living in London. They had a full-time commitment to their art practice, and occasionally worked in other employment around this in advisory/arts consultant roles.

P1 2000s	Participant one studied at Art School C, graduating in 2001. Since art school they had worked in arts administration and management roles. Having always lived in London, they remained there, now working full time in a senior arts management position. They have adapted their arts practice, but don't get much time to make art any longer. They believe they still will do one day however.
P2 2000s	Participant two studied at Art School B, graduating in 2003. They moved to London to study, but subsequently left to live in south-west England. Since art school they have adapted and prioritised their art practice while working in other roles, including as a part-time art teacher in primary education, still making and exhibiting their art alongside this.
P10 2000s	Participant ten studied at Art School A, graduating in 2004. They had recently completed an MA in fine art at a different London art school to their BA and made their art as full-time as possible around arts related employment including some teaching. They remained in London and wanted to be able to stay there long-term.
P12 2000s	Participant twelve studied at Art School D, graduating in 2009. Since leaving they had balanced working in non-arts related jobs and continuing to make art as much as possible, also undertaking residencies. They were about to move and commence studying on an alternative art school programme outside of London.
P8 2010s	Participant eight studied at Art School D, graduating in 2011. This artist had discontinued making afterwards and only recently begun again at the time of interview (in 2016), making art part-time around other employment that was not arts related. They wanted to study further in London to teach tertiary level art, seeing this as a way to continue developing their practice.
P3 2010s	Participant three graduated from Art School C in 2012, having begun their fine art BA at a different London art school. They still made and exhibited art regularly, among working other jobs, and identified with the job roles they took on as well as being an artist. They weren't convinced they would be able to stay in London much longer but wanted to.
P7 2010s	Participant seven studied at Art School B, graduating in 2013. They didn't make art unless they had an exhibition, but still made and

	exhibited, as well as working other jobs and undertaking residencies. This artist was considering returning to their home country outside of the UK.
P11 2010s	Participant eleven studied at Art School A, graduating in 2016. This artist had undertaken their first degree in a humanities subject before studying fine art as a mature student. They worked as an art teacher on a graduate teaching position at secondary level, and were contemplating quitting to prioritise their practice and work on it as full-time as possible, while attempting to remain in London.

Table 1: Participant Details

3.3.4 In/Post-Interview Processes

During interviews I asked questions, listened to the participants until they had finished answering, and would then ask responsive questions drawing on their initial answers, encouraging them to expand on points of interest. I developed a process of actively listening, making discreet notes so as not to interrupt the flow of the interview, and referring back to points the artists had made after they had answered. Though the set questions created a framework, I encouraged the artists to talk about what they wanted through the responsive questioning. This not only broke down some of the temporal framing, discussed before, but also elicited deep conversations about certain aspects of their lives, both art school related or otherwise. Later, as I began concurrent analysis my responsive questions became more focussed, as per theoretical sampling.

My emic position did not feel like a drawback, as some consider it can be (see Adams, 2015), rather, it enabled me to follow up the structured questions with relevant and empathic questioning, and perhaps also contributed to garnering some unconstrained responses (see Pezalla et al., 2012). However, though I focussed on eliciting the artists' stories, perhaps because of my position, occasionally they switched roles to question or implicate me and my story. Some participants separated us, saying, 'you may have seen people like that, but I have not' (P4:6473-6474), and, 'you're probably too young' (P4:7166). Others were cautious of the way their stories might be retold, suspecting an underlying agenda, commenting, 'I'm not up for being delineated [or] used in a narrative, where I am a person without agency' (P10:4586-4590). Though this comment was a rejection of being connected to gentrification, I felt my possible 'use'

of their account was being confronted. Another asked, 'so, how does what I say compare to what other people say? Am I echoing other people's opinions…?' (P11:4050-4052), perhaps wanting to ensure they were answering correctly. I mostly declined to answer, maintaining the focus on their stories rather than mine. However, these occurrences highlight some of the interplays of power and control, common in qualitative research (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009; Råheim et al., 2016), that I found myself navigating during the interviews, as well as after when analysing, where I noted this behaviour in written memos as 'retaining control', 'othering me', and 'distancing'.

A different interchange that played out during the interviews, was that I would get flashbacks of my experiences in relation to the participants' stories that would combine with overlapping memories. These flashbacks became part of my analytic process, which I engaged with post-interview through drawing, discussed further in section 3.4. I also began analytic memo writing post-interview. This entailed the noting down of initial thoughts, feelings, and reactions to anything that stood out for whatever reason. Later, during the coding stages this became an essential process to have carried out, allowing for preliminary ideas to be easily accessed, and comparisons to be made between first impressions and later perceptions.

3.3.5 Theoretical Sampling

The focussing of my responsive questions in the interview, moving away from chronological/structured questioning, was part of a key GTM strategy, that of theoretical sampling. This involves 'starting with data, constructing tentative ideas about the data, and then examining these ideas through further empirical inquiry' (Charmaz, 2006:102). I began data analysis after the first participant interview. The concurrent collection and analysis meant successive interviews were more relevantly carried out, deliberately 'traced with the insights provided by previous analyses' (Konecki, 2011:132). This was not a process of prioritising consensus, but stimulated my exploration of complex themes (see Whelan & Ryan, 2018:56). My set interview questions remained, but my probing around them sharpened as I challenged and questioned the themes and concepts I was interpreting through the parallel analysis. As noted earlier, the concurrent analysis influenced my sample size. Owing to my finding

of themes and 'saturating'[37] of categories through analysis carried out by coding and memoing (discussed next), the richness of what I found meant I contained my sample at twelve participants. As Charmaz (2006:114) notes, 'grounded theory logic invokes saturation as the criterion to apply to your categories' over continuing to enlarge sample sizes. Theoretical sampling continued throughout the development of categories, guided by previous analysis, as I simultaneous analysed and collected more data, the details of which I outline next.

3.4

Analysis: Coding, Categorising, Memoing, & Materialising

WRITING, DRAWING, MAKING, SPEAKING, FILMING, EDITING, PERFORMING

Analysis was carried out across three cycles of coding - Open, Axial, and Selective - with concurrent analytic memoing. In each cycle I applied GTM's simultaneous coding, sorting, and memoing (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) methods, which I developed and adapted through drawing, making, speaking, filming, editing, and performing. I also include a fourth cycle, that is writing-up-as-analysis. In this section, I outline my approach to each analytic cycle, situating my arts-based/informed methods, and explaining how I conceptualised through each stage, also giving examples of how what I did translates, and added value, to what I found out.

The aim of GTM analysis is to find out what's 'going on' (Birks & Mills, 2015) in the data, through generating codes, concurrent analytic memoing, and categorising these codes towards mid-range theory (Flick, 2018) construction. Charmaz (2014:4) succinctly defines GTM coding as,

> Coding means that we attach labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about. Through coding, we raise analytic questions about our data from the very beginning of data collection. Coding distils data, sorts them, and give us an analytic handle for making comparisons with other segments of data.

[37] The concept of saturation in grounded theory is understood to be 'the point, at which gathering more data about a theoretical category reveals no new properties nor yields any further theoretical insights about the emerging grounded theory' (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:611). It is also contested, due to paradigmatic notions that meaning is not 'static' but the 'world consists of a plurality of structures and mechanisms' (Zanti, 2015). While I note here that I reached a point of 'saturation', I also recognised the categories as being partial and provisional to change.

Researchers code in varying ways, some 'write directly on…transcripts', or 'write on cards', and there is software, including 'NVivo, or ATLAS.ti' (Charmaz 2000:520, cited in Pace, 2012:10), which produce codes. After codes are generated, they are categorised, which is, 'the analytic step…of selecting certain codes as having overriding significance or abstracting common themes and patterns in several codes into an analytic concept' (Charmaz, 2006:186). Categorising entails raising the 'conceptual level of the analysis from description to a more abstract, theoretical level', and defining 'the properties of the category, the conditions under which it is operative, the conditions under which it changes, and its relation to other categories' (ibid.). The most significant of these categories become the theoretical contribution. It is not a strictly linear process however. I categorised through and between four analytic cycles, not necessarily in that order. Figure 3 shows my development of categories, and the headings I use to group my findings; *concept categories/themes*, *subcategories* (mostly developed in the first three cycles) and *key categories*, *thematic categories*, and *core categories* (mostly through cycle four).

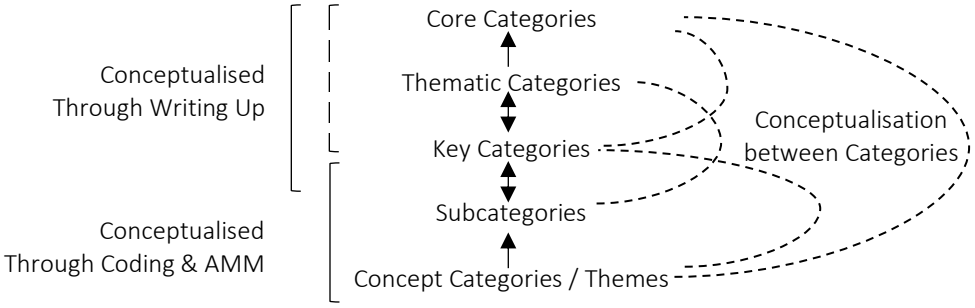

Figure 3: Cycles of Conceptualisation

3.4.1 First Cycle 'Open' Coding: Stepping into the Coding Cave

In the first coding cycle, I (metaphorically) entered what I call the 'Coding Cave'; places of isolation and deep focus on line-by-line coding of transcribed interviews. I set up my approach and apparatus to systematically code the data, developing an efficient system using Excel to contain the large quantities of data safely. This was computer-based, with manual typing of codes; methodically sorting and interpreting the data. I established an alpha-numeric system to trace codes back to participants and places in the transcripts, part of which is used in the thesis as participant pseudonyms, outlined earlier. Before this, it was necessary to decide which codes to apply.

3.4.1.1 Which Codes?

The types of codes chosen by qualitative researchers influence entire studies and their outcomes (Elliott, 2018). Following Saldaña's (2013) invaluable guidance, I trialled various codes on a section of transcript, considering their benefits, limitations, and application, settling on those which elicited the broadest yet most detailed conceptualisation. I tested *Descriptive*, *Emotions*, *In Vivo*, *Process*, *Values*, and *Versus* codes. *Emotions* and *Versus* were discounted due to being supplementary to others, more time consuming, and sometimes bifurcating. However, they remained influential in my decision making as I coded. *Versus* code was useful in questioning interpretations, and *Emotions* helped me consider participant's underlying values, beliefs, and motivations. Indeed, the core category of tensions, conflicts, and contradictions underlying the findings chapters and analysed in chapter seven relates directly to the artists' emotional responses I located in the data.

A brief outline of the chosen types of codes follows in Table 2 below, indicating their value and sequential application across each interview.

Descriptive	This code 'summarises in a word or short phrase - most often as a noun - the basic topic of the passage of qualitative data' (Saldaña, 2013:60). I applied this code to describe what was being discussed, not abbreviating or repeating content, but applying my interpretation and constructing meaning.
In Vivo	Pertinent verbatim words and 'terms used by [participants] themselves' (Strauss, 1987, cited in Saldaña, 2013:91) related to specific themes or concepts, were lifted from the transcripts. In selecting these, I considered outside of what was chosen, noting silences, hesitations, pauses, or repetitions from which interpretations were also made (see Bengtsson & Fynbo, 2018).
Values	I interpreted what participants said as either; an Attitude (A), being 'the way we think and feel about ourselves, another person, thing, or idea' (Saldaña, 2013:111); a Value (V), understood as 'the importance we attribute to oneself, another person, thing, or idea' (ibid.); or a Belief (B), being 'part of a system that includes our values and attitudes, plus our personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of the social world' (ibid.). This code required

	judgement and reasoning in construing meaning; ascertaining the undercurrents of participant's positions, local/worldviews, and perceptions.
Process	Gerund words described the action of what I felt was happening for the participant on physical, emotional, temporal, practical, conceptual, and psychological levels. I interpreted what was going on with the participant, analysing their position and process in that moment. The gerund word was often paired with descriptions of the action, further conceptualising themes.

Table 2: First Cycle Open Codes

Using these four codes across one interview at a time, I coded the data roughly stanza by stanza, breaking down the huge quantity of data from over twenty-one hours' of conversation into manageable portions to work on. A stanza was demarcated by a pause in speech, a change in subject, or when I asked the next question.

1	INTERVIEW 1		DESCRIPTIVE topic over content		IN VIVO		VALUES ATTITUDE, VALUE, BELIEF		PROCESS
29	P1: Well, that's quite a good question. Um, well, I	1D29		1IN29		1V29		1P29	
30	went to art school 'cause I was the best at art in my s-	1D30	BEING THE BEST	1IN30	I WENT TO ART SCHOOL 'CAUSE I WAS THE BEST'	1V30	B: I'm THE BEST	1P30	BELIEVING IN BEING THE BEST
31	all my schools throughout school time and it was all I	1D31	SCHOOL	1IN31	IN ALL MY ART SCHOOLS, IT WAS ALL I EVER WANTED TO DO'	1V31		1P31	
32	ever wanted to do. All I wanted to do was be an artist.	1D32	ARTIST	1IN32	ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS BE AN ARTIST'	1V32	B: I ONLY EVER WANTED TO BE AN ARTIST	1P32	WANTING TO BE AN ARTIST
33	All I wanted to do was paint and draw from the	1D33	PAINT AND DRAW	1IN33	ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS PAINT AND DRAW, FROM THE EARLIEST I CAN REMEMBER'	1V33	B: ARTISTS PAINT AND DRAW	1P33	WANTING TO PAINT AN DRAW
34	earliest I can remember through to– (1) yeah, to you	1D34		1IN34		1V34		1P34	
35	know– through to A-levels and that's-	1D35		1IN35	THROUGH TO A-LEVELS'	1V35		1P35	FOCUSING ON BEING AN ARTIST FROM YOUNG AGE

Figure 4: Open Coding (see Appendix 3 for further examples)

This approach (shown in figure 4) granted a multiplicitous, cross-sectional, and rigorous line-by-line probing of the transcripts, fracturing the data from each of the twelve interviews. I instigated conceptualisation through GTM's systematic 'close coding' (Charmaz, 2012:5) with analytic questioning from the start, pushing and pulling at the artists' stories to interpret what they said. The types of codes I chose, meant, as Charmaz (ibid.) suggests, I coded 'for actions and processes', enabling me to 'define connections between data'. This, alongside my performative approach detailed

shortly, resulted in many of the categories developed through this capturing what I felt the artists were *doing*, for example *Performing Congruence* and *Pursuing Approval* detailed in chapter four, *Becoming-Osmotic* and *Asserting Self-Ledness* outlined in chapter five, and *Navigating Realities*, *Recovering Practices*, and *Maintaining Motivation* presented in chapter six. Using the four codes (*Descriptive*, *In Vivo*, *Values*, & *Process*) sequentially meant I delved deep into areas of the artists' conversations, producing the abundant sets of codes. These were expanded through theoretical sampling, involving concurrent analytic memoing (and materialising) detailed next, which were integral to developing my findings.

3.4.2 Analytic Memoing & Materialising (AMM) with/through Art Practices

Analytic memoing is understood as the backbone of conceptualisation in GTM (Birks & Mills, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Flick, 2018). Conducted concurrently throughout each coding cycle, it increases 'the level of abstraction of your ideas' (Charmaz, 2014:162), forming the 'core of your analysis' (ibid.:19). As well as writing analytic memos, that is typical in GTM (Charmaz et al., 2017), I wanted to work in visual, physical, and material ways with the data, which included drawing, making, speaking, performing, filming, and editing. I developed and explored these arts-based/informed methods as analytic memoing, moving away from using only written (/typed) language that has dominated meaning making (Barad, 2007:133; Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017:10), towards conceptualisation that incorporates reflection and diffractive thinking through materials and actions (as well as words); I call this *Analytic Memoing & Materialising* (AMM).

While coding brings researchers closer to the researched, a key aspect of memoing, is in facilitating space between the researcher (me) and the researched (the participants, and to an extent also *me*), by engendering critical and analytic distance. Researchers can come in and out of their data through constant 'grounding' and 'distancing' (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:14). The arts-based/informed AMM I developed aided this, and helped me deal with a common issue for researchers, which was my entanglement with the subject (see Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009; Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017), where conceptualisation becomes enmeshed with one's own experience, and interwoven with overlapping memories (see Wesner, 2018:50). As an artist with crossover experiences

with the participating artists, I was aware, like other emically situated researchers (see Olive, 2014; Darling, 2016), that my closeness might influence assumptions or expectations. The arts-based/informed AMM processes I developed provided vital space and tools to work through this; such as drawing my intersecting memories as a reflexive device to deal with and understand empathy, compassion, and tensions, or creating a spatial performative element to my research process to control and confront power relations, and cope with the vastness of the data and my position among it. I detail these processes further shortly, however, these diffractive, intra-active approaches (Barad, 2007:89-91) I employed are discernible not by 'standing at a distance and representing' (ibid.:49), but their 'direct material engagement' (Barad, 2007; Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017). Through this closeness, I dealt with my enmeshment in the research, acknowledging and navigating my emic entanglement, gaining 'analytical distance' from the data, moving from 'working with data to conceptualising' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:218) through art practices.

GTM researchers are anticipated to engage subjectively with its methods (Saldaña, 2013; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Bryant & Charmaz, 2018), so in this sense, my approach is perhaps expected. However, to date, I have not found concrete examples of other artist-researchers using GTM. While there is a distinct willingness towards GTM being combined with artistic research, or used by art and design students (see Cooper 2010; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Pace, 2012; Compton & Barratt, 2016), there is a lack of a clear understanding, or examples, of ways in which artist-researchers can use GTM or how arts-based/informed methods can be used with GTM methods as part of meaning making. My research that incorporates creative interpretation within the framework of GTM's analytic coding and memoing methods offers this. Throughout the following sections I present this approach, detailing how I incorporated different art practices across GTM's first (Open), second (Axial), and third (Selective) coding and concurrent analytic memoing stages, making meaning through arts-based/informed material intra-actions.

3.4.3 First Cycle AMM

Ingold (2013:129) suggests that, 'both drawing and writing are ways a telling by hand', here I discuss the ways I *told by hand* in the first cycle.

3.4.3.1 Writing as AMM: Questioning & Answering

As per a classic strategy of GTM (Charmaz et al., 2017) I wrote analytic memos. Beginning after the first interview, and continuing after successive ones as a post-interview process, I typed up initial thoughts on what the artists discussed. Writing memos was then integrated during coding as and when ideas occurred, conceptualising to find nascent themes. For example, making the connection between professional development and no structure at art school discussed in-depth in chapter five, and being only an artist, a key concept supporting core categories, were both themes that were developed from these initial typed memos (see Appendix 4). Originally, I used Saldaña's (2013:49) pointers[38] to guide this process. However, this became somewhat prescriptive to follow, and risked either some forcing of analysis, or potentially missing more abstract thoughts that fell outside of these. I changed my guiding questions, favouring more open ones, to focus on the codes already raised and any connections that could be made (Charmaz, 2012:9). This worked well to embed the constant comparison strategy of GTM (Charmaz, 2014). I continually asked myself questions like: What is happening here? What are they saying/not saying? What am I hearing? What is underlying? What is this about? What are my assumptions? What intrigues or surprises me? This constant questioning fostered some analytic distance from the data, as discussed above, and forged the conceptualising, focussing, and expanding, that are fundamentals of making meaning through memoing in GTM (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz et al., 2017). During memoing, I also confronted personal feelings, partialities, and assumptions, tracking my position on the participants and topics arising. Separately, I noted my emotional and physical responses to the computer-based first cycle as it became a more embodied and durationally repetitious process. Though this wasn't analysed, nor intended to be, it was, like any backdrop to research, 'always already in my mind and body' (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018:829), cropping up 'unexpectedly and fittingly in my writing' (ibid.) as I analysed further through writing up later.

[38] I initially used the following questions and pointers: How do I personally relate to the participants & phenomenon? The Research Question: factors that influence & reflect. Code definitions and operational effect. Emergent patterns, categories, themes, concepts. Possible networks/links between the categories, themes, concepts. Emergent or related existing theory. Any problems with the study. Any personal or ethical dilemmas with the study. Future direction of the study. Analytic Memos thus far generated. Thoughts on the final report. Thoughts on coding as a method. (Saldaña, 2013:49).

3.4.3.2 Drawing as AMM: Analytic Flashbacks

Drawing as AMM preceded typed/written memos. Images/visualisations would appear as flashbacks during an interview, mingling with scenarios being described by participants, which I sketched afterwards. Through combined listening back, visualising, remembering, drawing, erasing, and re-drawing I made visual memos that connected our combined experiences. For example, figure 5 shows my drawing of a painting I made on my fine art degree that was positioned to mean one thing by a tutor and another by me, which I recalled through a participant's overlapping recollections about feeling pressured to find words to articulate visual output and resisting saying what the work was 'really about' (P4:1302), a topic highlighted in chapter five's discussion on *Art School Absorptions (ASA)*. Figure 6 depicts a collaborative performance a fellow student and I offered in response to our professional practice sessions, stimulated by what one artist recalled of their experience of this and their reticence towards it (P7:791-804), a theme also examined in chapter five, specifically through discussion on the artists' *Perceptions of Professional Development*. Drawing these aided my conceptualisation of particular themes/categories, and verbatim comments, like 'In Vivo' codes, that prompted the images were interwoven into the drawn memo, as '*a process of thinking, not the projection of a thought*' (Ingold, 2013:128, original emphasis), in which I was 'alternately sewing the line into the mind and the mind into the line' (ibid.).

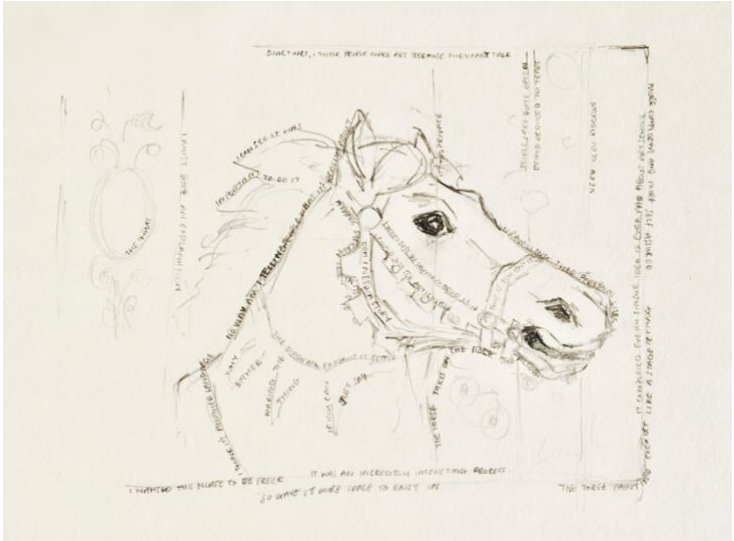

Figure 5: Drawing as AMM #1 (see also Appendix 5)

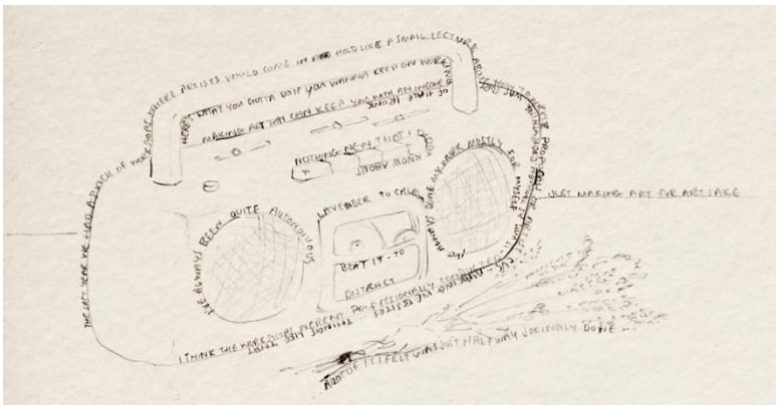

Figure 6: Drawing as AMM #2 (see also Appendix 6)

The visual-memos offer interpretations of collective and interconnected experiences, blending these through drawing and the handwritten. Like the typed memos, during coding I continued to develop a drawing over the duration of the playback of an interview. As well, some encompassed multiple participant's voices, similar to Axial coding discussed next, resulting in a multi-influenced (re)collected image that contained several of the artists' stories and mine. Figure 7 contains notions of the fleeting freedoms experienced at art school, encompassing realisations imbued with nostalgia, themes developed in chapters five and six, and analysed in chapter seven.

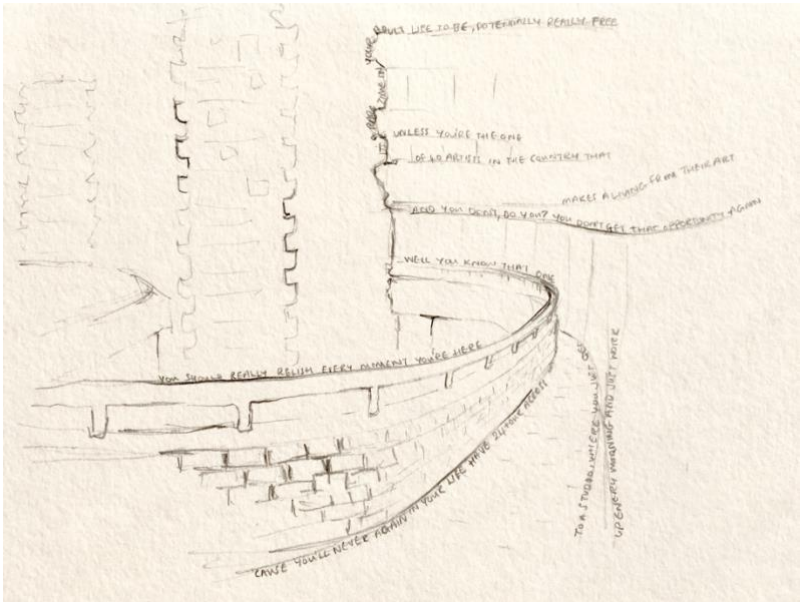

Figure 7: Drawing as AMM #3 (see also Appendix 7)

Making the drawings through the listening-thinking-drawing process became part of my analytic memoing as materialising, contributing to a key aspect of qualitative research that was, 'sensitizing me to my preconceived ideas and biases related to the

topic' (Cooper, 2010:99). Drawing was a decisively reflexive device, implicating myself as 'an instrument of the research process' (Faulkner et al. 2016:198), complimenting the typed memos, adding a direct 'process of self-confrontation' (Beck, 1994, cited in Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017:3), helping me code and categorise experiences that were in common with mine. My entanglement with the subject deepened through each interview and subsequent analysis of the data, activating personal and emotive memories of art school. Through drawing as AMM, I questioned and analysed my experiences, motivations, actions, and identity, that were surfaced through what the artists said, and in turn, honed my interpretations of their stories, developing themes and categories stemming from overlapping experiences and views.

3.4.4 Second Cycle 'Axial' Coding & AMM: Total Immersion Inside the Performative Fishbowl

In the second cycle, my approach changed from being (majoritively) computer-based, to physical and active immersion in the data. My conceptualising, sorting, interpreting, and *ways of telling*, happened through making, performing, filming, speaking, and intra-acting with, through, and among the data. I aligned with the idea that 'the relationship between data, however defined and grasped, and the researcher is one founded on action, interaction, and interpretation' (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:15). In Axial coding, the codes and categories determined from Open coding are treated like an 'axis around which the analyst delineates relationships and specifies the dimensions of this category' (Charmaz, 2006:188), to 'bring the data back together again into a coherent whole after the researcher has fractured them through line-by-line coding' (ibid.). In preparation, using Pattern coding as a 'Post-Coding Transition' (Saldaña, 2013:187), I condensed thousands of codes I had generated from Open coding, combining *Descriptive*, *In Vivo*, *Process*, and *Values* codes into single lists for each interview, into a 'meaningful and parsimonious unit of analysis' (Miles & Huberman, 1994, cited in Saldaña, 2013:201), distilling and defining some initial themes and concepts. I was ready for the second cycle.

3.4.4.1 Arts-Based/Informed Intra-action: Making, Performing, Filming, Speaking & Editing

3.4.4.1.1 Making

In wanting to work materially, I designed and made an apparatus through which to research, manage, and traverse the first cycle coded data in physical form. This contained twelve printed lists of distilled codes (see Appendix 8), one per participant, that were handmade from paper into reams of data, and wound onto spools that I could roll down from a fixed point.

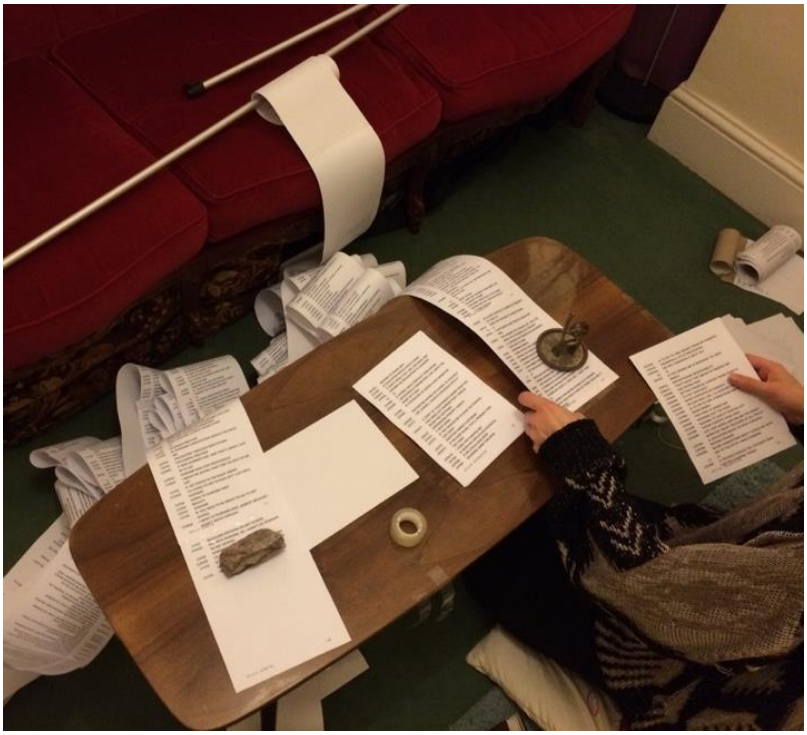

Figure 8: Making Data Reams

These were mounted within arm's reach in a room large enough for the data from each interview to be simultaneously unravelled and worked through. I called this, *The Scarsbrook Rolling Method* (SRM).

Figure 9: The Scarsbrook Rolling Method (SRM)

The design worked well for systematic sorting, barring some limitations of the apparatus, the room's size I worked in, and my body[39]. These constraints meant I worked on sections of the data reams, roughly from the beginnings to the ends of the interviews, rather than the having the whole corpus in front of me to move among and work on that way. This has notionally impacted on the chronological ordering of my thesis. However, as discussed earlier, these outcomes were to an extent moved away from through fracturing and sorting the data in each analytic cycle.

Through making the interactive kinetic research device, I instigated a productive process that engaged my 'sensory awareness' (Ingold, 2013:7), and an understanding of the 'generative currents of the materials' (ibid.). When constructing the apparatus I was materially and physically immersed, engendering the idea that 'materials think in

[39] Physical limitations of my body prohibited long periods of time crouching, sitting, or kneeling on the floor. Standing while sorting was a necessary consideration of my apparatus design.

us, as we think through them' (ibid.:6), as a process of me learning/teaching myself a specific way of learning from the data; that would be learning through *doing* (ibid.:2). I 'joined forces' with the materials of the data, thinking through them and physically 'bringing them together…splitting them apart, synthesising and distilling, in anticipation of what might emerge' (ibid.:22). The apparatus and environment I constructed opened up the data to interpretation through material inter/intra-action, inviting my whole body to lift, sort, and categorise the codes. Through moving, reading, thinking, finding, and applying stickers of differing colours, felt-tip mark delimiters, and over 500 handwritten post-it notes directly onto the interview rolls, I deliberately brought myself 'closer to and into greater sympathy with the observed' (ibid.:131).

Figure 10: Intra-acting with the Kinetic Data

As I coded to find connections, my productive process continued. I added post-it notes to the reams, and upon finding the same connection across multiple interviews (theoretically sampling), I selected and sorted the post-its into groups onto large sheets of paper opposite the suspended data, making assemblages of the notes which I called *Concept Islands* that contained the themes and categories I was piecing together. Findings from this analytic step became key categories, for example *Always & Only* which I foreground as underscoring the artists' motivations/reasons for attending art school in chapter four, *Negation of the Art School* discussed in chapter five as a response to art schooling, and the core category of *Freedom* which underlies themes in the findings chapters and is analysed in-depth in chapter seven. Through looking, pausing, questioning, selecting, and physically composing I produced twenty-one Concept Islands (see figure 11) to hold and reflect (literally and metaphorically) what I found in the data reams.

Figure 11: Concept Islands

I moved among and stood on top of the data, inscribing a different power dynamic than I had previously experienced. The feelings of empowerment, I realise now, stemmed from insecurities encountered during my research approach to that point, centring around my capabilities as a researcher to do my participants and the study justice. The apparatus design was my way of facilitating my agency in an active researcher role, and introducing constrain and control of my data in a 'boundary-making' (Barad, 2007:146) exercise typical of apparatus configuration (ibid.). The devised rolling technique (SRM) created a frame for the unfolding story that facilitated physical immersion and conceptualisation through, within, inside, and on top of the data, permitting a consciously diffractive intra-action that a straightforward transcript analysis would not.

Figure 12: Getting on Top of my Data

3.4.4.1.2 Performativity, Performing, & Filming

The apparatus and setting invoked active and spatial performative research that embedded 'understanding thinking, observing, and theorising as practices of engagement' (Barad, 2007:133). I carried out a 'living inquiry' (Meyer, 2010, cited in Fels, 2015a), with an acute awareness of how the environment (I partly created), flanked by reams of the artists' words and mine, was 'performing me' (see Fels, 2015b:151). I *performed* research, acting out the 'researcher' role, acknowledging my

actions attempted an 'embodied, empathetic way of knowing and deeply sensing the other (Conrod, 2009:168)' (Butler-Kisber 2010:137); *the other* being the twelve other artists represented in the reams. I named the room *The Performative Fishbowl*, owing to the research becoming performative, and that I gained an audience, where passers-by could observe me through two large windows going around and round in a series of findings, instilling performativity further (see Reissman, 2008, cited in Butler-Kisber, 2018). I also introduced a camera to my apparatus, to film myself working in the space, in a literal 'turning of the researcher lens back onto oneself' (Berger, 2015, cited in Faulkner et al. 2016:198), highlighting my situatedness and extending the reflexivity I developed in the first cycle drawings. As well, I arranged visits from supervisors (who also filmed me) and colleagues who were interested in witnessing the 'live' research-in-action. I experienced heightened levels of sur/sousveillance (Mann, 2004) as I simultaneously performed being a student, an artist, and a researcher, engaging those who visited as spectators of my actions, and performers (Lindemann, 2014) in my theatre of sprawling data reams, as they observed me observing, and held me (and let me go) in the different identities (ibid.). The camera provided motivation, akin to Foucault's *Panopticon* (1977[1975]), in that, it negated a need for actual audiences for me to continue performing these identities and actions (see Bell, 2006:215)[40].

Figure 13: Sur/sousveilled

My performative engagement added a level of understanding to the research that was active, interconnected, reflexive, and situated. Through my performativity and *doing*, I recognised the performances in the artists' speech, and the actions embedded in their

[40] Bell (2006:215) states, 'the power/knowledge relations that produce the subject require that subject – as their conditioned element – to respond in ways that in turn sustain those power/knowledge relations'. In other words, the presence of the actual and possible audience inscribed the impetus/motivation for me to continue *acting out* this research, whether they were there or not.

experiencing of art school. I highlight this throughout the findings chapters, as noted previously, which entail the artists' actions and processes, and in chapter seven I consider what the artists said as actions towards particular types of freedom in developing that core category.

3.4.4.1.3 Speaking & Editing

As well as stimulating performativity, and documenting my research-in-action, filming enabled an appropriate memoing approach aligned with the somatic active research taking place, where I spoke aloud as AMM. In *The Performative Fishbowl* I voiced memos towards the data, directly to camera, and into a recording device. This thinking-out-loud became an AMM method of Axial (and later Selective) coding. The quality of the spoken memos is more profuse and free-flowing than the typed sort, containing the syntheses of my observations as spontaneous conjecture, and productive reasoning, somewhat typical of the 'irrational free-playing mode' connected to abductive thinking (Locke, 2007:566-568). As well as voicing memos, I sung to the data, in what I now consider could be refrains, in a way, 'singing for comfort from the chaos of indeterminacy' (Garoian, 2015:10).

Afterwards, I edited the film footage, choosing, selecting, and piecing together voice memos and video to make the film *The Coding Cave and the Performative Fishbowl* (Scarsbrook, 2018) (see also Appendix 9). This process had varied purpose, giving the filming, and the film, multiple meaning; it is a collection of selected spoken analytic memos/materials; a documentation of my process; an aid to my performative inquiry in the second cycle; and a reflexive meaning making exercise that examines my entangled diffractive experience as an artist and a researcher using GTM, as a way of learning and knowing the participant's experiences more deeply.

Figure 14: Stills from *The Coding Cave & The Performative Fishbowl* (Scarsbrook, 2018)

3.4.5 Third Cycle 'Selective' Coding: Cats-Cradling in the Cow Barn & Patchworking for Patterns

3.4.5.1 Cats-Cradling

After Axial coding, in the Selective coding stage, the data took the form of twenty-one Concept Islands, necessitating a large area to code/analyse, achieved through installing it in a renovated cow barn in Shropshire, ensuring enough space to continue analysing through material and performative interpretation. The codes and categories generated from Selective coding are intended to function 'like an umbrella that covers and accounts for all other codes and categories formulated thus far' (Saldaña, 2013:223). Here my tools for conceptualising, materialising, sorting, connecting, and defining were twine, drawing pins, post-it notes, a chair to climb on to reach the highest parts, and me.

Figure 15: New Apparatus

Figure 16: Coding in the Cow Barn

First, I assembled the Concept Islands into related clusters (see figure 17) on a wooden panelled wall of the barn that meant I could temporarily affix, move, or anchor them using drawing pins. This was a significant moment of gathering the categories and themes together, sensing their overall connections and differences, and grouping as a selective analytic process for developing categories. Connections made through this method informed overall themes underlying the thesis, for example, *Validation* and *London/Reputation*, and *Luck* as part of *Negation* are developed in chapter four under *Motivation*, and the links between *Realities* and *Different Now/Different Today* are advanced in chapter six under *Recovery|Continuum*.

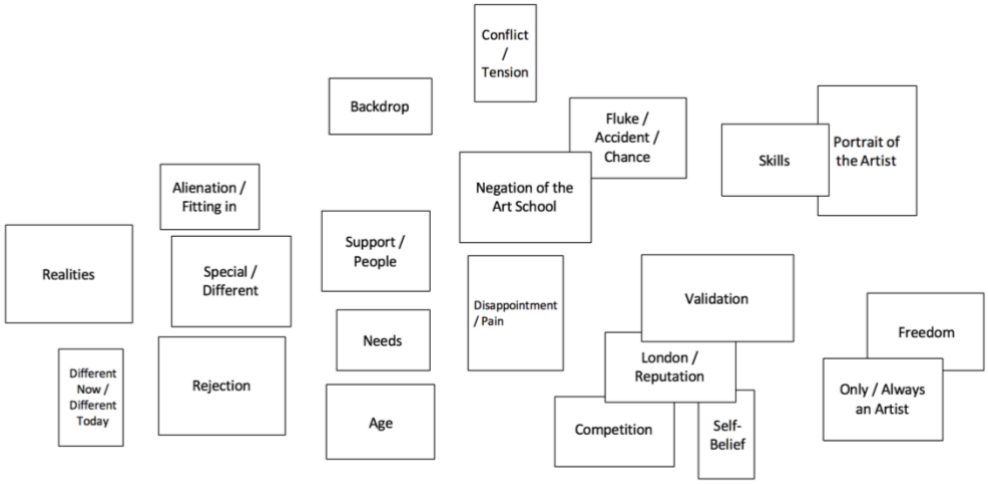

Figure 17: Diagram of Concept Island Clustering

After, as AMM in this third cycle, I used the twine with 'connective' post-it notes, to link ideas and find more patterns, saturating my interpretations of the subcategories and categories. In positioning the lines of twine, I made a network of associations and isolations, setting limits and defining clusters. I affixed handwritten post-it notes, naming the association between the categories at either end of the twine they were stuck on. Those shown below - *Who Defines the Artist?*, *Adaptability & Adaptation Period*, and *Separation Devices* - became significant to discussions in chapters five, six, and seven respectively.

Figure 18: Connective Post-it Notes

The networked cats-cradle of interwoven connective threads I made was more than superficially *modelling* knowing (see Gammack, et al. 2002), it was a way of *doing* knowing, resonant of Ingold's (2013:134) reflections on the strung line that, 'the stretched cord, string or thread…is a kind of 'hinge' between feelings and form, between bodily kinesis and speculative reason'. Perhaps also 'a metaphoric instance of self-reflexivity' (Easterbrook, 2010) as in Vonnegut's (1963) novel *Cat's Cradle*. My thinking and development of knowing at this point was embedded in my creating the web of interconnected core ideas through a new apparatus that permitted, 'certain properties [to] become determinate, while others [were] specifically excluded', dictated by 'the specificity of the experimental apparatus' (Barad, 2007:19).

Figure 19: Cats-Cradled Twine with Connective Post-Its

Through this the twenty-one categories were condensed, and connective patterns were mapped. As well as making meaning through doing, I again voiced memos and also made diagrams, furthering connections, thinking aloud, and telling by hand. The diagrams were like thought maps, through which I made sense of the connections and networks I constructed between the categories.

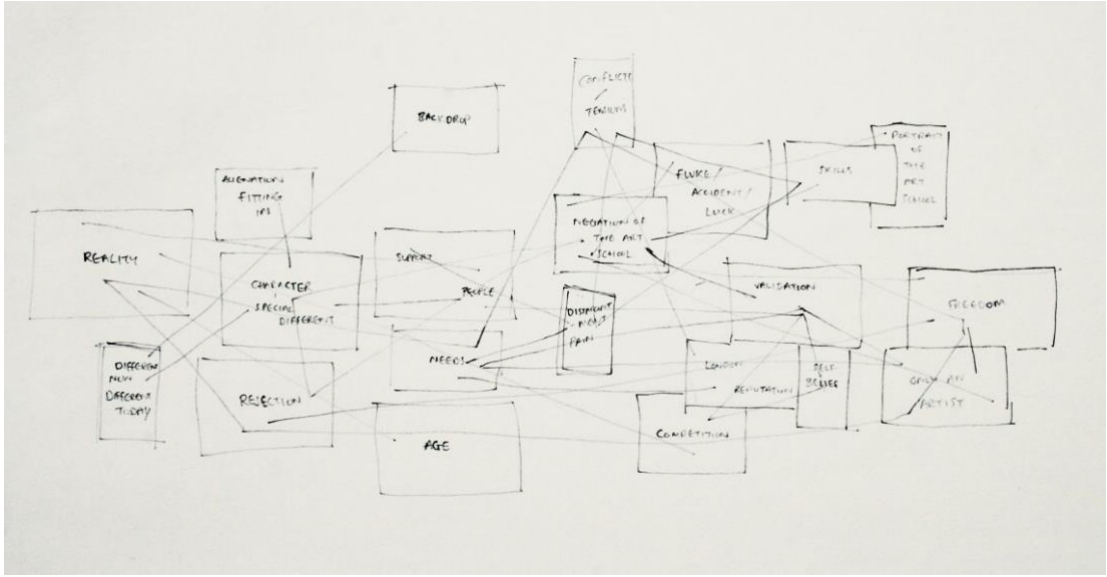

Figure 20: Diagram of Interconnectivity (see Appendix 10 for enlargement)

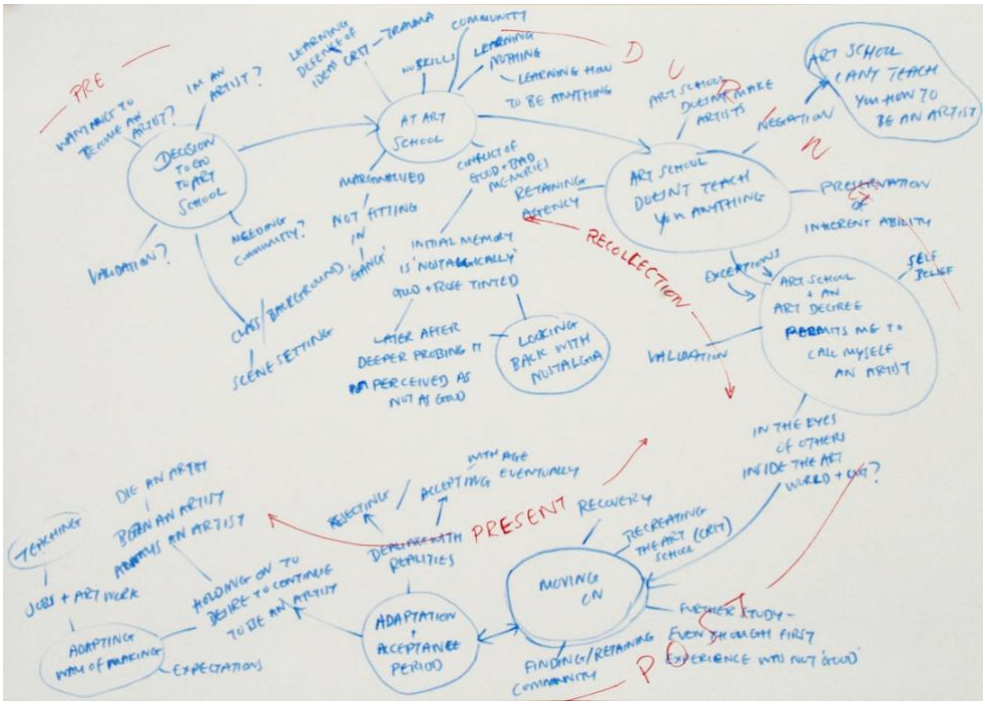

Figure 21: Thinking Through Thought Mapping

3.4.5.2 Patchworking

The distilled connections I made through the cats-cradling were handwritten onto note paper. Each note contained the category and connecting (sub)categories/themes I had identified. This format meant I could quickly manoeuvre them to make further connections/isolations. This step, I call *patchworking*, took place upon a patchwork quilted bed, informed by my spatial/physical situation. Working on the quilt not only provided an analogous visual link between my intra-actions at this point, in which I sorted and rearranged what felt like 'an amorphous collection of juxtaposed pieces that can be joined together in an infinite number of ways' (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004:526, cited in Ingold, 2013:133), and influenced my thinking about the interwoven connectedness between categories and themes. In my patchworking of the category notes, I experimented with joining them together in a number of ways, finding and sensing through doing. The physicality of this method permitted a matrix of multiple voices, interconnected yet multifarious, diverse yet combined as one voice, as an 'emergent accumulation, or colours of overlaid associations [belonging] to the matrix rather than to particular individuals within it' (Froggett et al., 2015:4), reminiscent of the patchwork quilt I worked upon.

Figure 22: Patchworking for Patterns

Following Saldaña's (2013:246-247) post-coding/pre-writing transitioning tips, I prioritised and distilled the categories further, selecting and sorting categories from the twenty-one overarching ones, condensing them into a top ten, and then a top eight. I went on to arrange these in different ways on the quilt; chronologically (pre-during-post art school), hierarchically (of what I determined had been expressed as most important to the participants), and relationally/interconnectedly (led by how inseparable the categories were due to overlapping subcategories). Through this process I selected eight categories to tell my interpretation of the artists' experiences and views, which were; *Needs*, *Special/Different*, *Freedom & Independence*, *Only & Always an Artist*, *Validation*, *Rejection*, *Negation of the Art School*, and *Realities*. These became embedded in, contextualised as, and developed through writing-as-analysis, discussed next, towards the core categories presented in this study.

3.4.6 Fourth Cycle: Thinking through Writing & Rewriting

Charmaz (2006:154) highlights that, 'the discovery process in grounded theory extends into the writing and rewriting stages' which 'become crucial phases of the analytic process'. Certainly, an exciting and motivating element of writing up, was continuing to discover more about my subject than I could have envisioned. As I wrote and rewrote my way through ideas, to particular conclusions, expanding findings by thinking through writing, this process became as important an analytic method as the coding and AMM of the previous three cycles. Like Charmaz (2006:154), I see this as part of the analytic process, and additionally, I consider writing up to be a fourth cycle of analysis, or, writing-up-as-analysis.

I approached writing up with both doubts and convictions; uncertain I would do the artists and thesis justice, yet confident I had rigorously explored the data in fine grained detail, that I had pushed myself to go further to find exciting new discoveries through the three preceding stages. In the fourth cycle, I critically examined the categories developed in the first three cycles, (re)positioning, (re)defining, distilling, and refining them, engaging and connecting these through and with extant theory. After a first draft, I carried out a final stage of theoretical sampling, sharpening and contextualising arguments and ideas through a *Finding the Findings* coding exercise (see Appendix

11), where I took the overarching themes I had developed through my first draft - *Tensions, Conflicts & Contradictions*, *Identity*, *Myth*, *Freedom*, and *Professionalisation* - raising these throughout the chapters to realise the core categories analysed in chapter seven. Each draft becoming 'more theoretical and comprehensive' (Charmaz, 2006:154), towards the version I present here.

I returned to the computer to write up, and to (typing) language and words as ways of making meaning and telling, something I had complemented with arts-based/informed AMM. Writing up was reflexive, diffractive, and intra-active. As a method of qualitative inquiry, writing is understood to involve the self as the 'instrument' of analytic meaning making, where writing is a 'method of discovery', of 'knowing', and a 'condition of possibility' (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018:819-827). These possibilities were only available when I consciously came out of my deep enmeshment with the data formed during cycles one to three. In the fourth cycle, while still referring to the data, I wrote from a critical distance, expanding, situating, and defining my findings. The words of the artists, as well as mine and those from wider discourse are blended towards a 'polyvocal' (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018:821) and original account of artists' experiences and views of London art schooling and their professional development.

When I consider where I am in the thesis, I am written into where my focus lies. The findings are inescapably diffracted through my perspectives and experiences, including my triumphs, struggles, and emotive experiences of art schooling. I have written these in, not directly, but among and through the topics I have found that are raised by the participants. Though my self-interview was not subjected to the same analytical treatment as the other participants for it to be included as such, my story is reflected and diffracted through the final text; as the thirteenth participant. Writing up has been a way of making sense of the subject, of the data, of what the artists told me, of the coded categories and themes I found, and often, a way of making sense of me.

3.5
Conclusion
MAKING MEANING THROUGH METHODOLOGY, METHODS, & ME

> It seems clear that research is actually more a craft than a slavish adherence to methodological rules. No study conforms exactly to a standard methodology; each one calls for the researcher to bend the methodology to the peculiarities of the setting.
>
> (Miles & Huberman, 1994:5)

The idea that a methodology can be standardised goes against today's versions of GTM. As Charmaz (2000:510) suggests, 'we can use grounded theory methods as flexible, heuristic strategies rather than as formulaic procedures'. This flexibility facilitated my experimentation with employing art practices as methods of meaning making with GTM methods. My arts-based/informed approach offers different possibilities for *doing* GTM (Ingold, 2013:9). I situate GTM as a methodology which can be used by artists, in combination with arts-based/informed methods, as a research methodology of the social sciences as well as the arts.

As an art schooled artist, I understand and employ 'knowing, acting and being' as 'central to learning creatively' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:29), because it is a pedagogical device of art schooling and a way of making meaning that I learnt. This informed my approach to using GTM that I have extended into creative interpretive ground. The creative processes I developed were informed by, and inform the analytic methods and strategies of GTM. Specifically, the incorporation of art practices both aided and became my analytic coding, memoing, and materialising processes. Utilising visual, material, and performative processes, involving drawing, making, speaking, filming, editing, and performing, I instigated direct material inter/intra-action to make meaning from the data and adding particular value to the findings I present in this study.

I recognise here, something I question in the film, as I look into my reflection with a camera strapped to my head facing an inescapable autopoietic feedback loop, that there is an inevitable introspection to my approach. The extent of artist-researchers' self-reflection/observation, is a rich topic, perhaps ironically instigating further academic research and conferences (for example SAR, 2018). Others might call my

blending art practice with GTM, 'noisy' (Clarke, 2003), like a 'bowerbird' (Brady, 2000) or even 'messy' (Law, 2003) as I have navigated and crossed boundaries, diffracting the rigours of art practices throughout the recursive methods of GTM. However, overarchingly, this has had a unifying effect that directly addressed the discipline and area of study - that of artists - and brought together myself as an artist with myself as a grounded theorist researcher who comes to this topic from an emic and diffracted position. Being an artist has informed my approach to GTM, and being/becoming a grounded theorist researcher has informed and extended my working methods as an artist.

My methods supported what became a more conscious diffraction of myself as a way of inducing reflexive understanding of my insider status, which sharpened my sensitivities and developed particular insights, which I drew on to analyse and creatively interpret what the artists told me of their experiences and views of art schooling that is embedded in the findings. Through combining art practices with GTM methods I have permeated the study, interwoven myself within its fabric as much as the twelve participating artists are sewn in. I have encountered some limitations, in using a semi-structured interview format, and faced restrictions through my apparatus, location, and body, that may have elicited a chronological telling of the artists' stories to reveal the overarching themes and core categories. However, these have had minimal impact; neither diminishing my development of an arts-based/informed approach to GTM, the rich study, nor the findings I have produced through this, which I present in the following chapters.

Figure 23: Still from *The Coding Cave & The Performative Fishbowl* (Scarsbrook, 2018)

Chapter 4
4. MOTIVATION
Why go to Art School?

4.1
Introduction

Through the next three chapters, I present my findings. In this, the first of those, I consider what motivated the artists in this study to attend art school, and introduce the core categories of identity, myth, freedom, and professionalisation that are interwoven throughout this and the following chapters, and contextualised in chapter seven. I interpret the numerous, complex, and sometimes contradictory, recollections as reasons and justifications for attending art school. The influence of both structure and agency are considered alongside where the two intersect, with a focus on the artists' experiences and their underlying ideas, beliefs, and emotions that I find embedded in their decisions. Throughout, discussion connects the core categories, interlinking the artists' identities with myths around talent and luck that inform the chosen locations of study, cementing validations around their being chosen that underlie aspects of their professionalisation.

Before outlining the contents of this chapter, I define my use of terms, first recognising the breadth of extant theories on motivation and reason. In philosophy, from Hume (1751[1975]) to Dancy (1994), motivation is a question of moral belief and desire. In psychology Maslow (1943), Ford (1996), and Beck (2000) position human needs, personal goals, and emotions as causal agents towards (in)action. In positive psychology Csíkszentmihályi (1975), Deci (1975), and Deci and Ryan (2000), and in sociology Mead (1932) and Turner (1987), the role of intrinsic motivation and agency is foregrounded. More recently, motivational theory has been advanced in areas of human development, in the related fields of social welfare, disability, and educational interest (Krapp, 2002; Wehmeyer et.al, 2017), and in identity studies (Lee & Oyserman 2012; Oyserman et al., 2017). I refer to discussion from across the spectrum, but focus on agency applied in educational settings, interest, and identity, to consider the artists' motivations.

Some of the terms I have already used are notably challenging. The differences between what are considered *motivations* and *reasons* are contested in philosophical debates, seen by some as mutually exclusive (Dancy, 1994, cited in Alvarez, 2016). The existence of motivational theory is scrutinised by claims that only justification exists, because, as Dancy (1994:1) suggests, 'no justifying reason can be a motivating reason and no motivating reason a justifying one'. This notion subscribes to the idea that justification is based on 'facts' gained through a lived, and therefore, 'evidenced' experience, and that conversely, motivation is centred on beliefs and desires based on acts yet to be experienced, which can only be justified *after* the action takes place. Similarly, Hannah Arendt (1958) considers that 'only when action has run a certain course, and its relationship to other actions has unfolded, can its significance be made fully manifest and be embodied in a narrative' (D'Entrèves, 2019), and, because of this deferral, 'it can provide further insight into the motives and aims of the actors' (ibid.). What I identify as the artists' motivations in attending art school, I understand to be mixed with their justifications and reasons for having gone, that distinguishing one from the other might be impossible. The motivations I discuss comprise both reasons and motivations drawn from the artists' recalls that were suggested to pre-date attending art school, which include personal beliefs, emotive stances, desires, and needs. In my outlining of these, I recognise a central concept of Arendt's that, 'the meaning of action itself is dependent upon the articulation retrospectively given to it by historians and narrators' (ibid.).

In section 4.2, I foreground the artists' motivations around the themes of identity and interconnected myths. I outline the artists' unceasing and emotionally engaged identifications as artists, coupled with desires to be *only* an artist, and the influence of artistic myth on these (Kris & Kurz, 1979[1934]; Soussloff, 1997; Wesner, 2018). I discuss identity-based motivation and acting congruently in line with temporally located possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Oyserman et al., 2017), as well as motivations towards particular freedoms concerning creativity (Csíkszentmihályi, 1975). In section 4.3, I consider opportunities the artists sought, discussing London's apparent appeal around certain freedoms and speculative value, the reputations of the chosen art schools, and seeking likemindedness. These are considered on structural levels (Rubinstein, 2001; Beck, 2000; Fuchs, 2001), the basis

of interest (Krapp, 2002), and in relation to identity, agency, and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In section 4.4, professionalisation is centred, where I examine aspirations around seeking the art school's stamp of approval, expectations of acquiring skills, and possibilities in becoming professional. I contextualise this through professional identity theories (Evetts, 2012; Nicolini & Roe, 2014), cultural studies of artists' careers (Paquette, 2012; Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Banks, 2017; Wesner, 2018), and theory on autonomy and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Finally, in section 4.5, I investigate the role of luck, referring to theoretical perspectives of epistemic (Pritchard, 2005) and resultant luck (Sartorio, 2012). I discuss luck as interwoven with talent, choice, and artistic myth, and reveal an underlying tension in this assertion around being chosen.

4.2

Always & Only an Artist

PERFORMING CONGRUENCE

'Did I act like the person I want to become?' (Markus & Nurius 1986, cited in Nicolini & Roe 2014:68) is a pertinent opening question to consider the key category *Always & Only an Artist* here. Additionally, I ask, 'did I act like the person I want to become, *in a way that recognises who I believe I am, and have always believed myself to be*? By extending this question I consider the artists' will to act congruently with their beliefs in their self-concepts[41], that are based in emotive, value-orientated attachments to past, present, and future perceptions of selves. The artists' attitudes, values, and beliefs are not positioned as essentialist concepts (Burr, 1995), rather, as becomes clear, these are emphasised as constructed through art schooled storylines and wider artistic myths, and the 'discursive culture' artists inhabit (ibid.:33). My performative inquiry during Axial coding enabled the piecing together of the *Always & Only* key category, as I physically intra-acted with the twelve data reams, materially linking and separating my thoughts with the artists' words to see and make this connection. I outline the meaning of *Always* and *Only* separately here, as well as indicating its interconnectedness as an identity-based motivation. First, I consider what was said of *Always*, and then of *Only*, being an artist.

[41] Introduced in chapter two as 'one's theory about oneself' (Lee & Oyserman, 2012:1).

4.2.1 Always an Artist

The participants revealed long-held identifications as artists, and beliefs in their creative talent from a young age. The establishment of a creative identity is understood as constructed through a 'narrative of continuity from 'who I was' to 'who I am' which functions as a claim to an identity as a creative' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:50). Additionally, I include '*who I see myself continuing to be*' because in this study, claims to creative identities also incorporated projections of future identifications. Indeed, artists' temporally located belief in themselves is interpreted elsewhere as a condition of being an artist, signalled by an 'inner enthusiasm' that is 'regarded as timeless' and seen to function 'as a key trademark for an individual artistic career' (Wesner, 2018:26).

Claims were made by the artists in this study that creative ambition began 'at a very early age', specifically noted as a desire to 'follow [their] own path, rather than do what's expected' (P6:3521-3528). One artist recalled, 'it was all I ever wanted to do. All I wanted to do was be an artist. All I wanted to do was paint and draw from the earliest I can remember' (P1:30-34). Another explained, 'I have been drawing and painting since I was very young, but without any encouragement…it was something I'd always done. It was always part of my life. I cannot remember a time when I didn't have a sketchbook' (P4:5037-5047). They continued to recall that their art school 'never ever questioned the fact that I was an artist' (P4:5177), indicating self-belief in the 'fact' of this prior to attending, while also becoming tearful upon recalling this. Their deep emotional attachment to this aspect of their identity is highlighted in their reaction to remembering a moment their long-held belief in themselves as an artist was confirmed at art school. In psychological studies on motivation it is understood that emotion and belief are deeply motivating when connected to identities, that 'emotion can be considered part of the information that along with external stimuli is integrated to perform controlled actions' (Harlé et al. 2013:1). It is also associated with emotive affects connected to (self-)efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 2008:38), self-efficacy referring to 'people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives', related to 'how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave…reflected in choice of courses of action, and in the intensity and persistence of effort' (Bandura, 1994:2). In this sense, and by acknowledgment that motivations are entangled with justifications, the artists may feel

enabled to assert these beliefs more confidently after having had these identities confirmed/validated through art schooling.

Notably, the artists' self-concepts also evidenced beliefs in having natural creative talent. One said, 'I think a lot of it was probably instinctual, or- something that I needed to do, on quite a molecular level, in a way' (P6:410-420). Another described a continuous 'instinct' for art, epitomising belief in *Always*, as they explained, 'the creative instinct is still there and it's still going to come. And sometimes it's going to come so fiercely that you just have to get up and do something' (P2:1306-1309). Others referred to their inherent ability in 'thinking' like an artist, saying, 'having that way of thinking', was apparent 'quite early on…even before I went to art school' (P1:3468-3471). Whether creativity is innate or can be taught has been an active debate, argued in a range of studies (see Hallman, 1964; Best, 1982; Craft et al., 2001). Whereas, discourse on *creative talent* goes beyond binary argumentation, instead suggesting that the 'family and social environment' surrounding such 'genetic capital' influences beliefs (Menger, 2014:142). Elsewhere, the possible existence of 'natural aptitude' (Banks, 2017:67) is not discounted, but considered inseparable from 'the social context in which it appears' (ibid.), and creative talent is viewed as being 'as much social as it is personal or innate' (ibid.). However, while some of the artists I studied mention their social environments and families, stating, '[art] was always present and there' (P10:164), also replicated elsewhere (Bourdieu, 1993; Burke & McManus, 2011; Banks, 2017), mostly, I found the artists were reluctant to admit to familial input as influencing their attending art school.

Instead, one artist spoke of having, 'very limited belief about my potential', reasoning that, 'it could come from my family background', explaining, 'I was the only person in my background to go university, and I didn't go to university, I went to art school' (P2:871-876). This comment eschews notions of parental guidance, isolates the art school as different, and intimates they felt atypical in their family in having attended tertiary education. Others explicitly stated, 'I'm not from a middle-class background…so, being an artist, or going to art school wasn't an option that was ever presented to me' (P6:41-44), again denying familial support/influence and highlighting

beliefs that middle-classes are more encouraging towards pursuing art[42]. These claims disavow either encouragement to pursue art, or 'inherited aptitude' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:50), that are often accepted as sparking the creative interest that leads to studying art. It also disrupts theories around the development of *interest* itself, that claim, 'with respect to the aims of the educational endeavour, the question of how interests develop and which conditions in family, school, and/or society have influenced the emergence and changes of interest is of central importance' (Krapp, 2002:13).

In its place, the presence of a different storyline persisted, one which indicates an underlying influence of artistic myth. Indeed, witnessing 'the tale of the early stirring of artistic talent' (Kris and Kurz, 1979[1934]:30) is common among other studies on artists (Røyseng et al., 2007; Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Wesner, 2018). Artistic myth is understood to incorporate images of the 'romantic artist, the genius and the starving artist' (Wesner, 2018:19), which during education extends to 'belief in "special talent"' (ibid.:28). These myths are thought to be constructed through imposed biographies and largely popularised through anecdotal stories that have propagated (homogenised and singularised) ideas of 'the' artist over time (Soussloff, 1997:149). Today, artistic myth is recognised as a 'functional, stable and motivational driver in artists' career trajectories' (Wesner, 2018:36). Though a complex relationship, which I unravel throughout the following chapters, the influence of myth is palpable in these artists' long-standing identifications as artists and beliefs in creative talent from a young age.

These assertions of historical beliefs were also coupled with projections of future selves, where one artist imagined, 'maybe I'll be like Louise Bourgeois and be famous in my 90s- for being an artist' (P1:3734-3735), while another anticipated, 'I think, maybe, when I'm 60, I'll be a really good artist, you know' (P6:3467-3469). These beliefs in consistent artistic selves, are indicative of motivations around possible selves that are understood constituents of an aspirant's 'project of becoming' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:5). In psychological studies, possible selves are positioned as central components of the self-concept, regulating behaviour and influencing motivation

[42] A different participant, who self-identified as upper-middle class, made comments that contest this idea however. They stated they were actively discouraged from doing an art degree, and were persuaded instead to attain a first degree at a prestigious university in a different subject beforehand, being told by their mum, 'you can go to art school after' (P11:387-388).

(Markus & Nurius, 1986:954). It is suggested, 'possible selves derive from representations of the self in the past and they include representations of the self in the future', forming 'a conceptual link between cognition and motivation…for future behavior [through] an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of self' (ibid.). On an agentic level, human action is also understood as temporally located, influenced by factors that are not just about future gain, but are based on past and present concepts of selves (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). These theories move away from rational choice theories, such as those of Bourdieu and Giddens, that are considered to have focussed on 'the role of habitus and routinised practices…[that] sees human agency as habitual, repetitive and taken for granted' (ibid.:263), or as purely 'optimising strategic interests' (Banks, 2014:254). Instead, agency is seen as,

> A temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine future possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualise past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)
>
> (ibid.:264)

In this thinking, believing oneself to have been an artist from an early age incentivises action towards the continuation of that self, and ideas of a future self are actively pursued through specific behaviour, like attending art school. This can be read as a convincing 'identity-congruent' (Oyserman et al. 2017:140) motivational factor in attending art school. When motivated by identities, people use 'the identities on their minds - identities have value and people regulate themselves in light of their identities' (ibid.), as well, they 'prefer to act and make sense of situations in identity-congruent ways…in ways that fit who they are now and want to become' (ibid.). In attending art school, the artists' actions can be understood as being motivated by their identities that operate within the flow of time, that they believe in, adopt and perform, influenced by myth and wanting to act congruently with their emotions and beliefs, based on who they feel they were, are, and want to remain/become.

4.2.2 Only an Artist

As well as considering themselves *Always* artists, the artists commonly expressed being, or wanting to be, *Only an Artist*. This concept has multiple connotations; as a

prospective attainment, a projected idea of the self, a mode of freedom sought in work related to self-regulated practice, and sometimes as an art school directive. As a motivation it can be taken to mean wanting to satisfy a desire to be fully immersed in the 'flow of making' and based on interests in gaining the freedom to make art full time. Comments relating to this alluded to what the artists sought most highly from their fine art education and beyond.

Art school was felt to offer a space for total absorption[43] in making and being creatively immersed. One participant explained they were 'captivated' after an early art educational experience and from their art schooling they 'wanted the immersion…wanted to be immersed in creative practice' (P2:33-36). Another stated 'art school was *just* about being an artist' (P11:138-139), specifically opting for a BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) to ensure no written component disrupted *Only* making, adding later that the experience they wanted from art school was 'one thing, it was to be an artist, and nothing else' (P11:1401-1422). For them, it was about tasting 'the absolute freedom that, maybe art school could, and…does perpetuate' (P11:1376-1381). An open education and freedom in making were frequently discussed as being sought through art school. One participant chose fine art over design specifically because they felt 'fine art theory is a lot more open' (P7:758). Another discussed the particular appeal of freedom in their art school's structureless[44] pedagogy, recalling returning to it from time away thinking, 'here I am back in it, and I want that freedom and I want that time. And I want to do it' (P1:813-819). Later, they yearned for this again, wishing 'to be back at art school' (P1:3527).

The artists' desires for creative immersion (and later for structureless learning), can be understood as interconnected intrinsic motivations relating to desires for independence and autonomy, influenced by seeking the kind of freedoms[45] these conditions might permit. As intrinsic motivations they relate to 'incentives residing in the performance of an activity' (Rheinberg, 2008:4-7). A longstanding idea behind 'in activity' motivation is the concept of 'flow experience', developed by Csíkszentmihályi (1975)

[43] Absorption is a term/concept I introduce here, and delineate further in chapter five.
[44] Structurelessness and the artists' experiences of it is discussed in-depth in chapter five.
[45] More detail of the core category of 'freedom' and what it means to the artists is extrapolated throughout the following chapters. It is introduced as a motivational facet of the desire to be '*Only*' an artist here.

and described as 'a psychological state in which the person feels simultaneously cognitively efficient, motivated and happy' (Moneta & Csíkszentmihályi, 1996:2770). Although flow theory is critiqued elsewhere for narrowly focussing on optimal experiences, rather than a full range of potential experiences (see Wright, 2016), and that people can experience flow doing 'bad' things (see Banks, 2014:251), the artists' deliberate seeking of creative immersion, or 'to *Only*', while not suggesting always an optimal experience, can be described as pursuing flow experiences. Indeed, the participant who had the early art educational experience, discussed above, described being driven by a desire to be 'living and breathing [their] artistic thoughts', as they recalled returning home from that excursion 'covered in mud' with 'unwashed hair' declaring, "Mum, I wanna go to art school!" (P2:22-25). This memory also conjures the influence of myth, with its creation of an image of an artist who, full of 'fury and madness' is fuelled by a type of 'divine ecstasy', like the '*divino artista*' (Kris & Kurz, 1979[1934]:49-59) that is given special status in 'only making'; a fantasy based on anecdotes (Soussloff, 1997) that is rarely accessible to most (if any) artists. This embodying of a type of creative identity is replicated in other studies, seen as 'conforming to the stereotypes and myths attached to it, including by looking the part' (Conor et al., 2013, cited in Taylor & Luckman, 2020:17), indicating self-interest/intentions are also perceptible in this motivation.

Self-intentionality associated with interest in educational activities is thought to pertain to, 'the goals and intentions related to the object area of an individual interest [that] are compatible with the attitudes, expectations, and values of the person's self-system' (Krapp, 2002:415). In other words, the artists' seeking certain freedoms to '*Only*' that might be afforded by structurelessness, reveals self-intended pursuits of autonomy related to self-regulation that were felt achievable. Krapp's (2002:410) theory of *Internalisation* helps in understanding this further, proposing that 'internalisation signifies the process by which a goal that has been external to the person is taken into the self-related structure of one's personality' (ibid.). The artists' (external) goal might include obtaining a degree, but elements of attaining this are internalised, specifically those related to their self-concept and self-systems. Furthermore, when considering specific interest in flow experiences (the artists' seeking to '*Only*'), the 'challenge/skill balance' (Schüler & Engeser, 2009:10) is an identified factor, explained as, 'the

subjective perception of a balance between the challenge of a task and the perceived own skills which can be used in order to cope with the challenge'. This infers there needs to be a belief in skills already by the person carrying out an activity based on attaining flow experience. The artists' belief in *Always*, where they see themselves as artists already prior to art schooling, means they feel equipped for challenges art schooling might pose, and *Always* and *Only* maintain each other. As well, mythic images of artists who only make (see Kris & Kurz, 1979[1934]:49-59) also tell them they should anticipate forging a space to '*Only*'. The notion of learning freely, making freely, and seemingly 'being free', through art schooling, emerges as a particular internalised interest specific to attending art school, and one that underlies the core category of freedom, and is interconnected with myth, identity, and professionalisation, discussed in chapter seven.

Interest levels are also interpreted as based on previous activity being positively (and/or presumably negatively) received, which impacts on being motivated towards (flow) experiences (or not) (Schüler et al., 2012:482). For artists, as discussed earlier, interest is understood to stem from differing levels of support, validation, and belief in talent from families and friends (Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Banks, 2017). While I do not dispute this, my study offers an alternative viewpoint due to the artists' disavowals of familial input coupled with displays of high interest levels for flow experiences (to '*Only*'). Instead, the artists' self-concepts and interrelated mythic characterisations appear as common influences on motivation. The art school also influenced these ideas, highlighted by the artist who recalled being consistently told by their art school, "You're an artist" (P3:3864), leading them to feel they could be seen as *only* that, having been positioned as 'only/solely' an artist. In a complex twist, this artist rejected this, wanting to avoid being perceived as 'privileged' (P3:3786) enough to be able to '*Only*' make art full time. The art school's tendency to influence the artists' stories they navigated throughout art schooling and beyond, as well as rejections of these, are concepts developed further in the following chapters as the artists' beliefs in themselves as artists and desires to '*Only*' make remains. Though what it means is shown to change over time, as per the idea that 'identification' is 'a construction, a process never completed - always 'in process'' (Hall, 1996:2). Next, I consider some of the opportunities the artists sought in attending art school.

4.3
Seeking Opportunity
LONDON, REPUTATION, & LIKEMINDEDNESS

Here, I explore the artists' attraction to London, where competition is steep, with an estimated 35,000 art and design students graduating each year (Togni, 2015), and where availability/affordability of studio spaces, and precariousness are known to bear 'significant effect on artists' ability to live and work' (GLA, 2014:8). I discuss motivations related to the reputations of the chosen art schools, centralising being chosen and its validating effects on (*Always*) identities and speculative value, unravelling the allure of likemindedness and the potential art school was perceived to offer. The interconnection of these subcategories, and why I situate them together here, was developed through the arts-based/informed methods I used. Specifically, the strung line of twine and connective post-its (see figure 18, p.95) I used in Selective coding to build a physical web facilitated and underscored my defining of these connections, isolations, and clusters.

4.3.1 The London Link

London graduates from creative courses are understood to have a substantially increased probability of accessing creative work compared to elsewhere in the UK (Brook et al., 2020). As well, London art schools are considered to have their 'pick of students' (Willer, 2018:13), due to provisioning unrivalled access to 'many influential artists on [their] staff' and possibly the 'easiest access' to 'museums and galleries' (ibid.). Certainly some in my study were drawn to London's 'cultural pull' (P2:140), reasoning 'more arts…private views [and] access to free museums and galleries' (P2:141-143). London was assumed to provide 'bigger stimulation', 'higher ceilings' (P7:124), a 'pool of opportunity' (P2:131-132), and the 'potential to do certain things' (P3:4334). One artist conveyed particular attachment to the city through their determination to return, saying 'I'd wanted to move back to London…and I'd wanted to do that via studying [art]' (P10:32-37), adding 'there was never any intention or desire to [study art] anywhere outside of the capital…I would have taken any of the London art schools who accepted me' (P10:288-289). Others had wanted to 'get out of London' yet stayed because they felt, 'at the end of the day, when the best schools are in London, it kind of seemed foolish to leave' (P1:107-110). London also represented a type of freedom (related to the topic of freedom that recurs throughout this study).

One artist saw the 'centre of the city and the nightlife…as a possible escape route' (P10:260-262), others sought escape from places where they thought little was happening, explaining 'I just wanted to be amongst things' (P9:154-159), and another felt London offered them a place to feel accepted as 'different' (P8:3129). The artists' attraction to London rests on their perceptions of the varied opportunities they felt it could offer.

Of course, perceptions of opportunity are imperfect, and access is often unequally attained. Today, understanding has shifted from ideas that 'anyone can become anything' (Bourdieu, 1986:46), towards opportunities being heritable and dependent (Banks, 2017). Having access to opportunity is not all, and acting on opportunities has long been understood as based on an individual's pre-existing economic, social, and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), and, more recently, the injustices therein (Banks, 2017), marked by unequal distribution and inability to accumulate equivalent capital over time. Thus, seeking opportunity in London raises questions about who opportunities are for, echoed in other studies that question 'who can take such risks [over] those for whom it is quite impossible' and 'who can somehow afford to live in London [or] have the cultural capital and the time to access its dense creative networks' (McRobbie, 2016:6). While these issues continue to be observed, next I consider related motivational theories of structure and agency.

In Rubinstein's (2001:ix) perspective, social structures present 'the array of costs and benefits available to the actor', within which, 'opportunity' is seen to drive 'behaviour' (ibid.:6). London, with its 'social institutions and practices' can be considered to have structural influence, containing 'regulative systems that define opportunities and constraints that guide, limit and inspire individual action' (Little, 1989, cited in Rubinstein, 2001:6). The costs and benefits hoped to come from immersion in London, outlined above, can be interpreted as chances to accrue the kinds of economic, social or cultural capital that Bourdieu discusses, which would necessitate possessing existing capital in these areas (Bourdieu 1984:345/6). Rubinstein (2001:31) views Bourdieu's theories as centrally based around structures of opportunity, in which structure exercises, 'controlling powers of opportunities' over agents. In this reading of the situation, London, as the structure, holds motivating incentives for the artists. However,

this explanation doesn't account for the agentic needs/capacities of the artists, nor the interdependence of structure and agency.

To take a different view, Beck's (2000:8) purposive logic of motivation places the onus of action on the agent, suggesting, 'we make decisions on the basis of the value to us of possible outcomes of our choices'. In other words, the agent is driven by perceived future value from a choice made to act. Beck (2000:25) considers we have certain human 'needs', that include 'such goals as striving for affiliation, power or achievement'. These needs cause action, but are not life threatening if not met. The artists saw London as a place that might be more stimulating, affording greater possibilities and certain freedoms. Under purposive logic, the artists were motivated by fulfilling purposive needs based on the perceived future value in their action. As Beck (2000:26, original emphasis) suggests, 'we look to the *future* and the potential outcomes of choosing different possible courses of action. Then we strive towards goals which we anticipate will be of the greatest *value* to us'. This is not to say that motivation around London should be understood as purely 'goal-driven' (Beck, 2000) and other factors can also be considered.

The speculative value London held/still holds for the artists is significant. Indeed, artists' projected development is thought to often include spending 'specific amounts of time at art school', as well as being, 'involved in nightlife and living out a creative, experimental existence' (Diederichsen, 2008:37); activities discussed by the artists as potentiated by London (notably a posteriori). In relation to speculative motivation, Bandura (1977) suggests levels of motivation are affected by levels of self-efficacy. Accordingly, the artists would have necessarily had to believe that they could take advantage of these opportunities beforehand, possessing what Bandura terms 'high self-efficacy', in order to 'visualize success scenarios' (Bandura, 1994:4). Given the artists' assertions of consistent self-concepts, though lacking familial/social influence, already discussed, it appears their identities may also be connected to London as a motivational factor. Certainly, the idea that 'the feeling we experience towards certain places and to the communities that the places help to define and that are themselves defined by the places…has a strong positive effect in defining our identity' (Giuliani, 2003), is apparent. I continue to consider identity and self-efficacy as I unravel the influences of validation, selection, and talent, next.

4.3.2 Choosing Reputation

The reputations of the chosen art schools held an irresistible appeal for the artists in deciding where to study. Some directly stated that, 'reputation preceded' their decision (P8:75). Others discussed the fame of their art school (P5:1031) as a factor. Repute was regularly used to gauge one's quality as an artist, with comments like, 'if you got into [Art School X] you must be good. Even to other [Art School X] students' (P4:5456-5457). Reputation was translated into a kind of 'currency' (P9:1222), reminiscent of Bourdieu's cultural capital (1986), felt to have been exchanged through attending a prestigious London art school and had a lasting effect on their careers, discussed further in chapter six. However, Bourdieu (1986:58) also suggests educational currency is impermanent, because it is, 'never entirely separable from their holders: their value rises [and I would also add 'falls'] in proportion to the value of their bearer'. This acknowledged, some of the artists still enthusiastically wore the reputational tattoos of the institutions they had chosen, attaching the name of the school as a prefix to their identity, as 'an [Art School X] artist', distinguishing their ongoing affiliation.

According to Fuchs (2001:36) 'reputation belongs to a structure or network…persons do not "make" reputations for themselves'. From this structural perspective the reputations the artists were drawn to, belong and are created by the art school and its affiliated networks. Becker (1982:358) suggests, art school reputations are based on the 'larger art world's assessment of the possibility of creating important work using the conventions characteristic of the school'. Taking these ideas into account, the artists' interest in reputation could lie in the surrounding network/structure, including the affiliated art world and potential access to it. While there is no official outline of the structure in which art schools exist, a picture of surrounding networks can be inferred by what attracted the artists. These include perceptions of alumni before attending, one commenting, 'the artists that it produced were the kinds of artists that I respected or admired' (P10:44-45), underscoring Becker's (1982:358) idea that, 'individual artists who belong to [the art school]' contribute to their reputations. Some were attracted by people graduating ahead of them becoming 'well-known' (P5:1456), and the reputations (P10:128) and quality (P7:484) of the lecturers. Others were

impressed with visiting artists, valuing their calibre (P10:1370) and conversations (P8:1483). This was also coupled with enthusiasm over well-known artists they'd had access to (P6:1834). Most mentioned the art school they chose had produced artists that became affiliated with the Young British Artists (YBAs[46]), one recalling their time felt 'potent' and 'like stardom was within our reaches, and everything was possible' (P2:1162-1163) due to the YBA connection.

In addition to this interpretation, as noted in chapter two, art schools exist as organisations of the wider art (and education) institutions (Berthod, 2017). This connection with museums, galleries, the art market, and the wider CCIs (McRobbie, 2011a) affords access to local and global art worlds that also influence their reputations. Rodner and Thompson's (2013:16) 'art machine' aptly describes this as an 'interlocking framework of legitimation' in which each of its parts (art schools, art fairs, auction houses, collectors, critics, museums etc.), act as 'essential tastemaker[s] in the cooperative construction of value in the arts…feeding off the brand-bestowing qualities of [others]' (ibid.). The demands on art schools to produce artist-types who make particular work to feed into this system is palpable in some of the artists' statements around the 'type' of artist they felt they were expected to be. One felt consigned to making, 'big, heavy sculpture' (P11:2546), and another conceded, 'I quickly learnt not to talk about those things or to use any kind of self-help or holistic language in my dialogues with my art school tutors' (P2:1026-1028), having been directly asked, ''do you wanna be a healing hippy? Or do you wanna be an artist?' - do you wanna be a community artist? Or do you want to be a Fine Artist?' (P2:1030-1032). They understood there to be a 'very strong sense of what the art school was trying to create' (P2:1033-1035). Art school's affiliation with the 'art machine' is criticised as leading to the narrow valorisation of art and artists under market-driven values (see Vishmidt, 2011). The demand/production of 'famous' artists sustains an autopoietic system of reputation causing reputation, like the 'endless rotation of personalities, celebrities and

[46] The Young British Artists or 'YBAs' refers to a group of artists who emerged in late 1980s, mostly graduates from London art schools, especially Goldsmiths, and known for 'their openness to materials and processes, shock tactics and entrepreneurial attitude' (Tate, 2020b). Artists attributed to the group include Damien Hirst, Tracy Emin, Rachel Whiteread, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Chris Ofili, and Yinka Shonibare. I did not intend to write the YBAs into this thesis, plenty of literature already covers and furthers their reputational reach (see Thomson, 2008; Muir, 2009). However, the artists in this study frequently bring the YBAs into their stories; in their motivations, discussed here, and later in their dashed hopes, discussed in chapter six.

stars' that stem from an 'obsession borne from perpetual investments in 'original' talent' (Banks, 2017:67). It is clear to see how operating within this system influences art school's input, output, and reputations (and vice-versa). This was seemingly understood by some of the artists, one acknowledging 'you were aware that you were being, kind of, groomed to be a particular sort of practitioner…but in a way, that's probably why you're there' (P6:989-986).

Being chosen by a prestigious London art school is thus of great significance for these artists, verifying perceived talents and character traits, which in chapter seven, I discuss as significant aspects of professionalisation. It is also important to recognise this as validation of certain dispositions and capital, as a reflection of social standing and class, and that 'people do not enter the area of competition as equals', but that, 'selectors may be reproducing some established systemic prejudices when it comes to identifying and judging talent' (Banks, 2017:84). Still, as one artist explained, '[Art School X] had a great status, took a very small number of people, so, if you got in, it did imply that you were of a calibre' (P11:52-55). Another artist saw themselves as 'the best' having studied at a school they considered to be 'the best place' (P1:473) based on its reputation. To further understand this motivation, I consider the artists' 'intrinsic' interest. Intrinsically motivated behaviours are seen as 'the prototype of self-determined actions [that] stem from the self' (Deci & Ryan, 2000:74). This is based on the concept of, 'whether people perceive their behavior to be self-determined (I do it because I want to) or as dependent on rewards controlled by others [I do it because I want what is on offer]' (Rheinberg, 2008:7). In Krapp's (2002) theory of Person-Object Conception of Interest (POI) the person, and the fundamental idea that people have a set of internal essential needs, is positioned at the centre of the course of action. In POI a person is 'intrinsically' led by 'a combination of emotional and value oriented components', triggered by, 'positive emotional experiences', which have, 'a prominent position within the individual's hierarchy of values' (Krapp, 2002:415). Choosing an art school based on reputation could hold just such an emotional and value-oriented prominence, since (*Always*) identities are also at stake. Krapp (ibid.) continues, 'the individual assigns positive value-related valences (U. Schiefele, 1992, 1999) to the goals, contents, and actions related to the domain of interest…if something is an interest it would have a prominent position within the individual's hierarchy of

values'. Such (continually) valued positive experiences were discussed around reputation, with one artist stating, 'it's twenty years, nearly…since I left [and] it still has a currency. I did BA and MA…it has a currency. A hundred percent' (P9:1222-1420). Choosing reputation is felt to have had a lasting effect for these artists. As such, the speculative value therein that is based on specific *time* spent at art school (Diederichsen, 2008:37), can be extended to contain attending 'specific' art schools with 'specific' reputations.

4.3.3 Looking for Lasting Likemindedness

Going to art school was also motivated by the hope of specific social interaction, pursuing connections, and the prospects of forging community bonds. Meeting people was a significant reason for attending, as one stated 'the social aspect of it, all the discussions I had were- have always been as important to me, if not more important than making work' (P8:1162-1166). Others directly prioritised social need, admitting, 'I needed to go to university to meet people' (P3:474-475). The artists alluded to the importance of these people, describing individuals they met as 'anchor points' (P2:1613) and 'key people' (P6:1829), and groups as, 'peer-groups' (P3:903), 'support-networks' (P10:3799), 'gang' (P2:702), 'the scene' (P10:3320), and 'community of practice'[47] (P9:3706), depicting the students, tutors, visiting artists, gallerists, and curators met through their schools and others, and from the wider London art scene.

Acting on this can be read as seeking to fulfil the need for 'relatedness', one of three fundamental human needs outlined by Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory[48] (the others being 'competence' and 'autonomy', discussed later). Relatedness is also understood as the need for affiliation (McClelland, 1985; Beck 2000), or belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Satisfying this need entails 'establishing a sense of communion with others', driven by a desire for, 'the experience of warm interpersonal relations' (Schüler et al., 2012:481-482). Indeed, one artist who spoke of

[47] This artist may have deliberately or inadvertently referenced Lave and Wenger's (1991) *Situated Learning*, and Wenger's (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning Meaning and Identity*. I discuss the connection further in chapter six.

[48] Though I outline critiques of Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory in chapter two (see Lourenço, 2017), their theories offer a rich theoretical lens, alongside others, through which to consider the artists' motivations in this chapter, and overall themes throughout the thesis, particularly when analysing the artists' assertions around self-determination, self-regulation, and autonomy.

their 'gang', stated that across the group, 'there was a really strong sense of identity' (P2:702-703), demonstrating that fulfilling relatedness is interconnected with group identification. This highlights common character, eschewing ideas of the solo artist figure prevalent in myth and wider discourse (see Becker, 1982), an idea discussed further in the coming chapters. The artists also revealed an array of perceived value affiliated with the people they met. This ranged from practical guidance to encouragement, inspiration, and a nurturing support system, to forms of opportunity, validation, and a sense of likemindedness that lasted beyond their art school days.

The range of relatedness on offer, that is, the types of people available to meet at art school, of course also stems from art school selection processes. The integrity of which, as noted before, is disputed as art schools seeking certain dispositions in their students, including a 'wide cultural knowledge and participation, good manners, refined comportment and an ability to express…in appropriately eloquent, academic or informed way' (Banks, 2017:76). Some of these resonate in this study, where artists experienced being selected either to suit a 'highly aggressively critical' (P8:641) environment, based on 'steely-eyed ambition' (P9:970), or on their 'personality' over their work (P10:808). Others added 'non-macho types' (P6:151), 'rebels' and 'outsiders' (P5:184&937), and 'working class' (P9:1949) were recruited during their time. The last point, made by a 1990s graduate, chimes with Bank's (2017:78) study that indicates art schools were once 'relatively inclusive' and open to working class applicants. However, as footnoted in chapter two, those who self-identified as working class in this study, doubted they would be able to attend art school now (P3:510, P10:1884, P9:1476) owing to the introduction/increasing of tuition fees, since they had studied, echoing recent indications of a drop in this group's attendance (see Banks & Oakley, 2015). In contrast to studies that see artists coming together in art schools based on 'similar cultural backgrounds, financial means, lifestyle, social values and expectations' (Bain, 2005:36), the artists in this study came from a range of backgrounds and demographics, not sharing similarities in all areas. However, irrespective of their mixed backgrounds a consistent factor was in all identifying as artists, discussed in section 4.2, and seeking similar others in that regard, as a key facet of motivation towards relatedness in this instance. Next, I consider motivation based

around the interconnected core categories of professionalisation and identity, and the anticipation of art school to transform.

4.4
Pursuing Approval

THE ESCAPE FROM AMATEURISM

Validation and recognition are discussed as key motivations in this section, in which attending art school is shown as based in justifying creative identity claims and becoming professional. This echoes other studies that suggest, 'self-declaration and self-appointment as an artist is effectively an empty claim without societal acknowledgement [via art schooling] of that chosen identity' (Bain, 2005:35), and that education is often viewed by artists as a 'formalising step to recognition in a professional sense and to gaining entry to the art establishment' (Wesner, 2018:27). Here, I outline motivations around pursuing acceptance and professional recognition.

4.4.1 The Stamp of Approval

For one artist, attending art school would mean avoiding the labels of 'outsider artist' or 'hobbyist'. They stated,

> If you don't have a degree, it's almost immediately outsider art, no matter what you do. Because…no-one's put the stamp on you, that you're actually an artist. You're just some, sort of, weird [person] doing your hobby.
>
> (P7:1782-1790)

Aspiring to obtain the 'stamp' can be understood as a component of professionalisation, as gaining approval, escaping amateurism, and feeling enabled to assert accepted professional identities. Being welcomed into the 'professional culture' is recognised to occur through 'the course of training…as [artist-students] participate in the day-to-day activities of the art world' (Becker, 1982:59). As well, becoming/being a professional artist is said to involve 'successful claim and defence of professional status through the construction and maintenance of an artistic identity' (Bain, 2005:34). The artists frequently asserted they felt art school would legitimate their calling themselves artists, acknowledged here as seeking to validate the identities they held prior belief in. One artist recalled that before art school, although they were making art, they said 'the first

thing people say is, "Have you been to art school?" And, if you haven't…people don't accept that you are an artist…I didn't accept it' (P4:5137-5144). They further acknowledged that having had a different career before art schooling, they felt, 'the only way [they could] become an artist [was] by going to art school' (P4:5150-5152). This could contradict previous claims to having always perceived themselves as an artist, discussed in section 4.2, however, a motivational aspect of attending art school appears specifically related to feeling accepted as an artist (and a particular kind of artist) in the eyes of others. A different artist stated 'just by having a degree from…an art college, people tend to take you a bit more serious' (P7:1665-1667), resonating with Bain's (2005:33) idea that being taken seriously enables use of the title 'professional artist'. Indeed, some felt more authorised to call themselves an artist, saying, 'it confirmed to me that I was an artist' (P6:2448), validating what they already knew. Others recognised that changing their status was intentionally sought, admitting, 'I just wanted them to change me. That was the deal. You got in and you would be transformed…You'd pass through, and come out the other side this thing, and that's what it was about' (P9:1344-1348). The artists appear motivated by confirming prior identity claims and aiding present/future defence of their professional status. This motivation both fulfils a need to accept themselves and feel accepted by others as (professional) artists, and relates to Bain's (2005:35) notion that, 'artists frequently opt to bolster their claim to professional status by undertaking extended periods of formal school training'.

Though this motivation appears competence related (i.e. having their creative aptitude recognised), to understand this further here, I consider the artists' intrinsic needs around autonomy and their underlying drives to self-determine. When one's goal is personally related, motivation is regulated as intrinsic, meaning the artists were motivated by 'a conscious valuing of a behavioral goal or regulation, such that the action is accepted or owned as personally important' (Deci & Ryan, 2000:72). The goal might seem to be to get a degree, or make art in a relatively free way for three years, but obtaining the stamp of approval from art school is personally important; highly significant to the artists' self-concept, and, as outlined earlier and becomes more apparent in the following chapters, is also emotionally meaningful. The asserted beliefs in themselves as artists before art school infers conscious attachments of value to their attending art

school specifically to gain endorsement of their claims around these identities. Indeed, sometimes it is explicitly stated; they wanted to go to art school to be accepted as an artist by themselves and others (P4:5137). Acting upon this will have occurred, 'when identified regulations [the thoughts and behaviours we act upon] are fully assimilated to the self' (Deci & Ryan, 2000:73). Thus, the artists' line of thinking that includes, 'I am an artist', with wanting to be *taken seriously*, *confirmed* or *accepted*, have been 'evaluated and brought into congruence with [their]…values and needs' (ibid.) as the motivation behind attending, and importantly, wanting to *be selected*. Though being selected might be based on a 'homophilic or dispositional basis' (Banks, 2017:78) which upholds (biased) valuations of the selected person (ibid.), additionally, I suggest being selected also permits artists to feel accepted as professional members of the arts community/institution (at least for the duration of their art schooling).

4.4.2 Becoming Professional

In terms of becoming professional, the artists' disclosures relating to obtaining a stamp of approval are concurrent with professional identity theories that suggest, 'identity construction processes in the arts involves dealing with the 'assigned' identity' (Paquette, 2012:19). For artists it is also understood that 'the representation of the cultural and artistic self…are built in society and circulate through its discursive space' (ibid.), which additionally, are interconnected with myth (see Hawthorne, 2006). Elsewhere, it is also suggested that, 'having a particular identity such as artistic identity means assigning oneself to particular social category or being assigned to it by others' (Fearon, 1999, in Wesner, 2018:88). These ideas highlight that professional artistic identities are co-constructed through both society and individuals, which I consider here through reflecting on the artists' expectations and experiences around becoming professional.

Being motivated to attain professional status through art schooling was overtly stated by one artist who said, 'I wanted to go somewhere to become professional…to be professionalised' (P4:5524-5529). For others, this motivation was embedded in unmet expectations of what they felt they should have been taught. One highlighted, 'it was never really told to us, like, how you should price something' (P12:2537-2538). While others' anticipated gains were in, 'understanding the lay of the land

professionally…what opportunities are available to you in terms of funding and in terms of sales, and how to structure a business' and 'do taxes' (P10:3859-3872). They also wanted to know, 'how to deal with…a patron or a collector… how [to] develop tools to navigate those situations', and what, 'a studio visit look[s] like and what's it for?' (P10:2124-2139). These were cited as what they had wanted to take from art school, admittedly after the fact, and after realising what was missing from their courses that could aid them in their actual/ongoing professional careers post art school. Also highlighted in this is an image of a professional artist's career, that is seemingly object-centred, rather than socially-engaged, process-based, or involving different economies. This may reflect the kinds of artists I interviewed, however, it is also possible they took this view from their art school, in terms of what they were encouraged to make and what kind of artist they felt they could be/become at art school and after, a discussion developed further in the next chapter. Others, however, stated alternative reasons for studying relating to becoming professional, that moved away from practical skilling or object-centred practice, which was an expectation of gaining ambition, and surpassing the 'poverty of aspiration' (P9:170) they had grown up with. For them, becoming professional through art schooling was about, 'the ambition. It was, 'You'll be an artist'', admitting that that sounded, 'hopelessly romantic now' (P9:1557-1561).

The artists' desires for both practical skilling (of a kind) and types of personal development can be understood on the basis that professionalism is considered to be, 'an occupational value in tension between professional ideology and professional norms' (Evetts, 2003 cited in Paquette, 2012:12). Becoming professional is appealing on both normative and ideological levels; norms being expressed through the desire to know how to 'structure a small business', and ideologically in terms of accessing something more intangible like 'ambition'. In professional identity theory, becoming professional enables 'autonomy in decision-making and discretion in work practices…and in some cases…self-regulation or the occupational control of work (Freidson, 1994)' (Evetts, 2012:7). Thus, underlying the artists' motivations could be a desire for the fulfilment of gaining this kind of control. As well, as noted before, the artists' needs to have their perceived competences acknowledged is also a factor. The need for competence is understood to include being motivated by 'succeeding at

challenging tasks and experiencing effectance[49] when attaining desired outcomes' (White, 1959, cited in Schüler et al., 2012:481). To fulfil this, 'need satisfaction [of competence] is facilitated by the internalization and integration of culturally endorsed values and behaviors' (Deci & Ryan 2008:75). In professional identity theory, identities are understood to develop through these co-created processes that occur between the specific environments and people (in this case tutors/educators) of the institutions involved and the individual (the artist-students) (Paquette, 2012:15). In cultural theory, for artists in particular, 'professional identity…is experienced as shared expertise and therefore involves a sense of superiority over the amateur or the irregular practitioner' (Bain, 2005:33). In order to assess the endorsement of the artists' competencies, as per these evaluations, they must have been assessed in a professional capacity by other professionals, an example of which is explained below.

4.4.3 Talking the Talk

Evetts (2012:5-7) suggests that, broadly, professions 'create and maintain distinct professional values or moral obligations (e.g. codes of ethics)', and, professional identity, 'includes aspects such as exclusive ownership of an area of expertise and knowledge' (ibid.). Distinct areas of expertise the artists discussed centred on specific language they were expected (P4:1409), and trained (P7:1703), to use to talk about artworks. Some studies caution the perpetuation of such language in the arts, denouncing it as 'International Art English' (IAE) (Rule & Levine, 2012), and designating it a 'linguistically meaningless jumble of buzzwords' (Davis, 2013). Though IAE predominantly refers to language used in exhibition press releases and wall texts, the artists frequently suggested they were encouraged to adopt this. Being schooled in this language was seen by one of the artists as deliberate, infiltrating the art school 'from museums and…contemporary art galleries' (P4:1454-1455), and intended for use in these professional settings from where it was thought to originate (P4:1445). Others appeared to have been drawn to this aspect of art schooling, expressing awareness that art school was explicitly 'about being couched in the terms' (P5:4973) in preparation for the art world.

[49] Effectance is achieved when a sense of (self-)efficacy prevails by succeeding at difficult undertakings (see Klimmt & Hartmann, 2006).

Using specialised language is a significant feature of learning in many professions, influencing professional identification (see Northcott, 2008; Deter, 2011; Park & Schallert, 2019). In the arts, in particular, Banks (2017:79) suggests that 'talking the talk' is part of the array of 'selective judgements of talents', but that these are also, 'less obviously standardised and 'measurable''. Indeed, for one of the artists in this study talking the talk became a measure of professional ability. A specific encounter with a museum curator was recalled, who was perceived to have changed their behaviour towards them and their colleague once they were aware that they, 'both had degrees from London colleges, and could really talk about the...different theories and concepts around the work' (P7:1698-1706). Due to this, the artist stated the curator 'became another person towards us', which they added was 'super-nice', if 'sadly', a 'bit weird' (P7:1710-1725). When I questioned why 'sadly/weird', they said they disliked that kind of 'valuation', feeling that they were the same person as before their degree, just that now they could 'speak on a level' (P7:1740). While this artist balanced this experience with a refutation of a kind (a topic developed in the next chapter), the demonstration of 'expert knowledge' in the form of linguistic aptitude, was validated in a professional setting as an endorsement of professionalism, exemplifying a collective establishment of a professional identity. Clot and Kostulski (2011, cited in Nicolini & Roe 2014:4) describe professional identities as being shaped via a three-way 'intersection' that includes; 'impersonal prescriptions, routines, and rules that define expectation of the organization in terms of task'; 'transpersonal influences that carry the historical memory of the practice…of a specific professional genre'; and, 'interpersonal interactions and dialogues with other professionals'. Instances of these 'intersections' are apparent in the participant's recollection of their interaction with the curator. In demonstrating endorsable linguistic aptitude, they complied with the 'routines' and 'rules' of expected behaviours, that were subsequently validated in exchanges with professionals from within the art world.

In Paquette's (2012:15) view, professional identities stem from the, 'collective processes of the organization' as the 'result of the individual's negotiation with organizational contingencies [and] are tied in and understood as the product of organizational cultures and sub-cultures'. Connecting this idea with motivational theories on competence, it can be understood that professional identities are perpetuated

through continued interaction with the professional 'organisation' so long as they provide positive performance feedback. Experiencing positive acknowledgement of a person's competence was experienced in the curator example, which accordingly is understood to impact on future motivation for that activity (Deci & Ryan, 2000:70), satisfying the human need for competence that drives people to want to continue engaging in a certain activity (ibid.). This may be the case, however, the role of chance is also a factor, and one which surfaces tensions around choice, choosing, and being chosen, as well as being connected to myth, as discussed next.

4.5
Being Lucky

CHOSEN AGAINST ALL ODDS

Luck, serendipity, and fluke were embedded in the artists' reasons for attending art school. This finding reflects other studies that show 'references to chance' to be 'part of a general pattern' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:51) for artists, and of serendipity's ongoing role in underlying their careers (Taylor & Luckman, 2020:2). Elsewhere, luck has been positioned in artists' careers in ways that suggest with enough confidence, optimism, and willpower, artists can make their own luck, choose their fate, and garner opportunities (Thom, 2017:78). However, this argument overlooks that luck, opportunity, conviction, and assurance are unequally accessible. In this section, I consider the artists' positioning of luck in their attending art school, revealing tensions at the intersection of being lucky and being chosen, and highlighting validations of talent alongside perpetuated myths as complex and contradictory aspects in these artists' motivations.

4.5.1 A Complete Fluke

Frequent assertions were made by the artists that attending art school had happened accidentally. Some said 'ending up' at art school was a 'complete fluke' (P5:108), others said they 'went to art school by accident' (P9:43), or that it was a 'bit of an accident' (P1:76). One said they felt they were 'lucky to go to uni [sic]' (P3:780), and some felt 'lucky' to get in (P11:59) or be 'accepted' (P2:65) by certain institutions. Others emphasised 'it was a series of events, really, that ended up with me being there' (P4:377-381), and another said it was, 'kind of, all by accident. It never was planned' (P12:276). These assertions bring into question the artists' intentions, and highlight

events out of their control as influencing their motivation at this point. The use of luck appears to deny planned intent, relinquishing some responsibility over their action.

Assertions of being lucky hold two-fold meaning, however, and the artists also described being told by tutors that their chances as graduates would necessarily involve luck. One artist recalled being advised, 'if one of you, at the end of this, ends up working as an artist, you'll be lucky' (P10:5132-5133), while others said it was frequently conveyed that they would have only a small chance of continuing with their practice post art school, being told, 'in a few years' time…2% of you will be making and showing and exhibiting work' (P8:2157-2159), others were told, 'out of the entire course, there might be four people still practising art at the age of 40' (P5:1102-1105)[50]. While this advice alludes to the type of artist art schools (in this study) envision, which has already been discussed as related to an object-centred practice, it also perhaps simply corroborates notions like Becker's (1982:52), which reason the slim chances of continuation, emphasising there are always many more 'aspirant' artist-students than ever gain recognition. While 'recognition' is also loaded and circumstantial, significantly, the art school's advice necessitating luck in artists' careers, can also perpetuate it because of the way storylines function as discursive strategies (Hawthorne, 2006). The embedding of which conflates storylines of luck and talent with being chosen, validation, and influences negation, themes discussed further shortly.

Historically, artists are shown taking on motifs from antecedent accounts of other artists. Luck, in particular, is exemplified in the adoption of the fable of Giotto's childhood, that Kris and Kurz (1979[1934]:28) identify as containing 'the influence of chance that enables the youth [artist] to choose [their] career and thence to rise in social standing', coupled with 'the discovery of talent'. Myth, talent, and luck are undeniably interconnected. However, myths are perceived to be based on a certain amount of, 'unreliability of historical evidence in biographies' (Soussloff, 1997:120), of which the

[50] The report *What do creative arts graduates do?* (Kelly, 2018) states 'Artist' was the 'most reported job title amongst fine arts graduates with 21.4% working as artists'. However, though notionally higher than the artists in this study discussed, the data is difficult to assess. For instance, the parameters of what 'working as an artist' means is contingent on individual practices and circumstances. It is also unknown whether an individual's self-concept was considered alongside this data, nor what type of artist-graduate responded. For example what practices entailed, how they related 'working as an artist' to other employment, and their capacities to define themselves as 'working artists'. These are considerations this study encounters throughout the following chapters.

art school, as well as Becker, the artists (and myself to an extent) can be considered 'myth messengers' perpetuating 'the meaning of myth even further' (Wesner, 2018:22). In this instance, the art school may be maintaining myths around luck through a kind of imposed biography (Soussloff, 1997) like the 'image of the artist that the historian had in mind' (Kris & Kurz, 1979[1934]:11), or, in this case, the image that the art school has in mind. The artists are told they will be 'lucky' to continue as artists, they will need luck, and luck is eventually subsumed into their stories, expectations, and lives, exemplified in other studies, where 'luck and being able to access the right things at the right time' (Slater et.al. 2013:20) continue to be identified as highly important to artists in their ongoing careers.

4.5.2 Kind of Lucky

To assess what kind of luck might be being asserted by the artists, I considered philosophical discussions on moral luck (Nagel, 1979; Williams, 1981; Pritchard, 2005). This included discerning whether constitutive luck (the belief in one's own innate luck), circumstantial luck (luck is in the circumstance in which an agent finds themselves), and causal luck (previous circumstances cause the perception of luck in a current situation) (Nagel, 1979, cited in Nelkin, 2013) might be being drawn upon. However, while these types of luck are certainly relevant to the artists' assertions around luck, here I focus on epistemic luck and resultant luck. Epistemic luck is situated in the realm of knowledge and 'true' belief, and so lends itself to looking at educational settings such as art school, where cognitive and perceptive expansion are part of anticipated outcomes (see Orr & Shreeve, 2018; Newall, 2019). Resultant luck is relevant for understanding the artists' control and responsibility in the (intended) result of their actions (Sartorio, 2012).

In epistemic luck, a lucky event is considered, 'an event that occurs in the actual world but which does not occur in a wide class of the nearest possible worlds where the relevant initial conditions for that event are the same' (Pritchard, 2005:128). These 'nearby possible worlds' (ibid.) refer to the slim chances of the same event happening elsewhere, but not too distantly away so as the circumstances can be considered as lucky if an event does (or does not) occur (an event not occurring can still be considered lucky, depending on the event - not getting hit by a falling branch for example). For an

event to be perceived as epistemically lucky, the agent's action/behaviour/enquiry is not in their control, (usually) in the acquisition of knowledge/truth/cognitive 'success', and thus their responsibility for an event happening can be called into question. Epistemic luck relates to cognitive success, that the acquiring of knowledge excludes or includes an element of chance. In situations like this, calling an event lucky can serve to undermine achievement and place the responsibility for knowledge on something out of the control of the person seeking an answer/knowledge/truth. It is also described as a, 'generic notion used to describe any of a number of ways in which it can be accidental, coincidental, or fortuitous that a person has a true belief' (Engel, 1992: no pagination).

In relation to what the artists say, epistemic luck can be considered when thinking about what art schooled cognitive success might be determined as, and also what the kind of 'true beliefs' are that an artist seeks to attain from studying art. These are admittedly difficult to define. However, through various pedagogical means, cognitive success in art school, to an extent, relates to 'becoming' an artist (see Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Garoian, 2017); that is, learning 'how to be' an artist (a theme developed in chapter five). The kind of true beliefs the artists pursued in attending art school, outlined earlier in some of the practical and personal skills sought, would show this as a portrayal of epistemic luck; that they felt lucky in being skilled to become artists with this knowledge. However, the artists also assert beliefs in themselves as artists prior to art schooling, which somewhat conflates the idea that these artists consider themselves epistemically lucky. Rather, they are not 'lucky' in the sense of becoming artists through attending art school, because they already express beliefs in knowing that to be true beforehand. The luck they emphasise is thus not solely based in cognitive successes or knowledge of true beliefs in themselves as artists that stem from art schooling. This supports ideas I have already outlined, that motivation in attending art school is not exclusively based on attaining a degree, or accruing a certain cognitive acumen, but is located in more personally value-laden and emotively aligned areas such as identification, approval of talent, and in myth preservation, all recurrent themes of this study developed through the following chapters.

4.5.3 Selection & Serendipity

Another lens of luck through which to view the situation is resultant luck. A concept developed by Nagel (1979) in relation to moral luck[51] and responsibility. Resultant luck refers directly to whether one is in control of 'the way things turn out' (Nelkin, 2013) in a given situation. It alludes to varying factors that are outside of the supposed control of the agent and whether an agent is thus (morally) responsible for the results of their actions. If the person is deemed in control of their actions they may or may not be deemed responsible for the outcome of those actions due to influential external factors (Sartorio, 2012). Looking to resultant luck allows for the consideration of the role and responsibility of the art school as a factor that was outside of the control of the artists.

Carolina Sartorio (2012:68) has developed the idea of resultant luck further to include the idea of an 'agent-driven outcome', which is the '"agent-driven" reading of "how things turn out"'. She suggests that, 'a case of resultant luck [involving agent-driven outcome] is not just a case where an agent is or is not responsible for an outcome that s/he brought about or didn't bring about, but a case where the agent is or is not responsible for an outcome' (ibid.). Earlier in this chapter, the artists are shown taking responsibility for their decision to go, but here they apparently avoid full responsibility for their actually attending art school. The artists' utilisation of luck, thus places responsibility onto the art school, whose decision they imply as essential to their attending. This is, of course, somewhat true; the art school will have indeed decided through their recruitment and interview procedures as to whether or not the artists got to study there. Though, as noted earlier, the ethics of this are critiqued (Banks, 2017). It is in the artists' deliberate relinquishing of full responsibility through adopting principles of resultant luck, that they shift the focus from their volition, to assertions that they were chosen; notably by their chosen art schools.

[51] The question of 'moral luck' is embedded in *resultant luck*, and has a vast body of theory attached to it that could permit a tangential philosophical debate on morality here. To avoid this, I recognise moral judgement as a contingent part of *resultant luck*, and confirm that I borrow some of the principles of *resultant luck* to observe the artists' assertions that luck played a part in their actions and motivations in attending art school, as opposed to situating my argument in the area of culpable blame or responsibility as a judgement of moral or immoral acts on the part of the artists.

Though principles of resultant luck are employed by the artists, whether or not they can be considered lucky, or whether this is part of the construction of their stories that contains reproducing myths, requires a slightly different viewpoint. This includes judging their intention and motivation, that is, 'whether the agent's behavior *results* in what actually happens' (Sartorio, 2012:67, original emphasis). Resultant luck is bound by how we pass judgement of a situation based on what we perceive the relation between intention and the actual result to be - did the agent intend for this result or not? In which case, the artists attending art school cannot be considered entirely the result of their being 'lucky' in this sense, because it was their intention to do so, which then *actually* resulted in them going. Calling it lucky, however, complicates other specified volitional acts, diverting responsibility away from their agentic capacity to act, transferring it onto the other player in the situation; the art school, which becomes implicated as choosing them. Connected back to their belief in themselves as always having been artists, it also supports and validates their beliefs that they are artists in having been chosen.

A further complication in assertions of being lucky, however, is, if they are just lucky to have gone, they can effectively bypass having specifically acted to seek attending, and crucially, I believe this relates to relinquishing a need for the art school and denying a need in being taught. This can also be understood as an act of self-determination, acknowledged as important to artists (Deuze & Lewis, 2013). In asserting that they are simply lucky to have gone, they evade the notion that they might have specifically sought *being taught* to be/become an artist, which could conflate beliefs/projections that they already were, and conflict with beliefs (/myths) in talent from a young age. It should be noted, none of the artists expressed they believed they went to art school because they thought it would make them into an artist. It may have 'confirmed' to some, but they already held enough conviction in the belief of their self-conception beforehand. Within this, calling oneself lucky surfaces tension around whether or not seeking to attend art school translates to mean seeking being taught to be/become an artist, and if to do so, threatens these artists' identities (see Breakwell, 1986). Certainly, using luck interrupts other highlighted motivations discussed earlier, around choosing reputation for example, and seems to relate to the artists' apparent anxieties around admitting to needing art school validation, which in turn appears to heighten

self-determination in its place. In this reading, the artists' downplaying of the art school's validating effects, implies the artists' emphasis on self-determination.

Being lucky thus holds multiple meaning; it highlights a need for the validating facets of being chosen, yet is also used as a smokescreen for not needing the art school in being taught. It indicates a game of legitimation being played between self-validation and being chosen; heightening and relinquishing control and responsibility on both sides. The artists might seem less responsible for their actions, but so too might the art school. The art school's role in instilling luck in these artists' stories, noted at the beginning of this section, can be read as a perpetuation of myth making through the imparting of ideas that reproduce the particular element of luck in artists' careers. The artists blend assertions of being lucky with talent, highlighting being chosen, yet also refuting ideas of needing to be taught, infusing their belief in themselves as artists who don't *need* the art school. This interconnected concept was first developed through the cats-cradling method (shown in figure 19, p.95), through which I specifically defined and connected groups and categories including *Luck*, *Validation*, and *Negation*. I discuss this further in the following chapter when examining a key category of this study; the negation of the art school.

4.6
Conclusion

In this chapter I evaluated why these artists attended art school through bringing together their reasons, justifications, and motivations. I did this across the themes of identity, myth, freedom, and professionalisation, that were embedded within the fabric of the stories they wanted to share. I show extrinsic and intrinsic factors are at play; led by both the structures and affiliated networks surrounding their chosen art schools, as well as the artists' individual agentic and internalised wants and needs that are interconnected with their identities. Together, these collectively produce a consensus of causes to action.

The perception of London as being abundant with opportunities is coupled with choosing reputation, which turn out to be as much about being chosen by reputation, and having their talent recognised and self-belief validated. Gaining access to significant and influential people was important for the artists in meeting their needs in

relatedness inspiring them to go to art school. The desire to obtain a stamp of approval as a 'professional' were also highlighted as specifically imagined returns for studying fine art. Strikingly, the artists did not relate their motivation as springing from an interest in being 'taught' to 'become' an artist, a key discussion point I take up in the next chapter. Neither would they attribute interest to familial input or encouragement. Instead, they preferred to use frames that resonated with artistic myths, asserting belief in their creative talent, their longstanding artistic identities, and being lucky instead, also highlighting the pervasive influence of myths.

Attending art school is about far more than pursuing pure educational interest alone. Rather, the artists' emotionally embedded identities and self-concepts are shown to play the biggest role as motivational factors in their attending art school. They were led by wanting to act in identity-congruent ways that matched temporally located beliefs they expressed around their artist identities, acting like the artist they wanted to become, based on the artist they believed themselves to already be. Being motivated by these identities extends to seeking freedoms around self-determination and self-regulation; ideas that surface again later in discussions around practices of freedom contextualised in chapter seven. They also expressed belief in and acted out storylines around their skills and talent, falling back on elements of myth as a driving force to action. But perhaps the most complex idea is behind assertions of being lucky, which highlights concepts of responsibility and control surrounding the artists' actions that demonstrate an apparent struggle in their attempts to simultaneously emphasise and deny the validating effects of the art school. Asserting being chosen, and also underscoring they were artists already.

Tensions arise in the intricate assemblage of motivations detailed in this chapter. In the admissions of having talent from a young age, but not basing it on any form of encouragement, needing the art school to choose them, yet refraining from giving the art school all of the credit, comes denial too. Through the asserted role of luck, whilst they permit the art school some credit for choosing them, they also relinquish their own responsibility for seeking being taught, or of needing to be perceived as having chosen to attend art school, emphasising the conception of themselves as being artists already. Being chosen and believing oneself to be an artist already might be seemingly opposed,

but they are part of the same phenomena; the artists' endeavour and their reason for attending art school. Without the self-belief they likely wouldn't go, and without being chosen, which represents recognition of talent and professional approval, they would struggle to see themselves as professional artists. The art school approves who they already believed they were, and professionalises them, perpetuating belief in themselves and confirming their talent, as well as perpetuating the myths they are built on, in a way that they could not do without it. As I move into the next chapter I continue to question a deep struggle that emerges here, that is, whether the artists are attempting to resolve tensions in themselves around why they went, what they got out of it, and whether it validated them, or, if owing to their self-belief and desires to self-regulate, they felt they ought to be able to do that by themselves. I subsequently consider; what happens when they get what they thought they wanted?

Chapter *5*
5. REACTION
On the Inside

5.1
Introduction

The term *Reaction*, used in this chapter's title, is notable as a 'process in which substances act mutually on each other and are changed into different substances, or one substance changes into other substances' (Oxford University Press, 2019). As a definition of chemical reaction, these characteristics are recognisable in this chapter around discussion of the artists' recollections of what happened at art school, connected to identifications, and in relation to art school's professionalising pedagogies. *Inside*, also in the title, has double meaning; referring to what happens inside the art school, often positioned as different to that on the 'outside'[52], and referencing the externalisation of the artists' internal reactions, revealing tensions around mythologised images involving freedoms to make and self-regulate during art schooling.

In section 5.2, under the term Art School Absorptions (ASA), I discuss what the artists said they took from art school, emphasising agentic controls over what was absorbed and what was rejected, and highlighting the theme of freedom in these artists' accounts. I detail complexities within the portrayals of skilling and in the unconstrained views on professional development curricula. In section 5.3, I consider pedagogical concepts and ways of learning, including C/crits, osmotically learning, and structurelessness. How the artists' navigated identities through these, the myths that underlie them, and supposed freedoms therein, as well as how these relate to professionalisation are discussed as key underlying themes. I reveal both criticism and praise of art schooling, considering assessment criteria that inhibits development, and learning independently as interconnected with self-regulation. In section 5.4, I connect acts of negation with assertions of self-ledness under the key category *The Negation of the Art School*. These quests underpin the chapter, highlighted through consistent critiques and rejections of the art school and its pedagogy, coupled with assertions of heightened agentic capacity

[52] This discussion is relevant to this chapter and is developed further in chapter six as a subcategory of the Navigating Realities key category.

and control over what and how absorptions are taken on. These discussions also overarchingly situate de/reconstructions of identifications through art schooling. The tussle between who determines/defines the artists, in a place where transformation takes place (Orr & Shreeve, 2018), and moreover professionalisation, is developed as a central finding throughout this chapter.

Discussion is positioned alongside art and design pedagogical and curricula studies. An increase in interest in the subject has been highlighted (Newall, 2019), contributing to a growing body of works in the field. These include discourses that come from educational and cultural theorists (jagodzinski, 2014, 2017, 2018; Houghton, 2016; Garoian, 2015, 2017; Baldacchino, 2015) as well as policymakers, advisors, and advocacy reports (Slater et al. 2013; Warwick Commission, 2015; Gordon-Nesbitt, 2015; Allen & Rowles, 2016), and curators, arts educators, and artists (Birnbaum, 2009; Bauer, 2009; Crippa, 2014; Orr & Shreeve, 2018; Newall, 2019). Some crossover exists between these groups, with some theorists also being educators, some educators also being artists, and so on, meaning that practical application and experiential knowledge are drawn upon in many of these texts. It is noticeable however, that much extant literature tends to posit externalised, or top-down, views related to policy or institutional objectives on what ought/ought not be included in art and design curricula. Most of this literature is centred on how art might best be taught, led by those designing and delivering the curricula, or those involved with provisions for postgraduate artists. It is rare that art and design pedagogy is discussed from the perspective of its proposed recipients; the artist-students. A few exceptions are studies which interpret interviews with visual artists (see Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Shreeve & Batchelor 2012; Wesner, 2018), or which specifically present their perspectives (Louden, 2013, 2017). These studies add rich insights into the lives of artists in their own contexts, though are less explicitly focused on artists' perspectives of fine art schooling as a particular facet of their development that I focus on here.

Literature I refer to situates the kinds of skills, types of learning, and different onto-epistemological[53] positions that are anticipated as being communicated through

[53] This term refers to the notion that being (ontology) and ways of knowing (epistemology) are recognised as mutually entangled, as per Barad's (2007) diffractive approach; an approach taken up in arts pedagogical literature (see Atkinson, 2015; Garoian, 2015; jagodzinski, 2018).

current art school pedagogies (see de Duve, 1994; Bishop, 2012; Garoian, 2015; Baldacchino, 2015; jagodzinski, 2018). I do not seek to add to debates around what should/should not be included in fine art pedagogy in terms of skilling, there is much of that literature already in circulation (see Elkins, 2001; Buckley & Conomos, 2009; Ferguson, 2009; Davis & Tilley, 2016; Newall, 2019). Rather, in highlighting how artists experience art school, in this chapter I address a gap in understanding in this area, highlighting the seeming imbalance between how educators perceive the curricula they design to be experienced, with how it is experienced by those on the receiving end. I begin by considering what the artists recalled choosing to take on from their art schooling.

5.2
Skilling

EXPECTATION | ABSORPTION | REJECTION

The concept of skilling artists is a relatively recent phenomenon (de Duve, 1994). Art and skills were not always equated with each other, rather, art was usually perceived through the lens of talent (ibid.). Today, skilling is expressed in binary debates which have divided skills into hard vs soft, practical vs conceptual (Willer, 2018), and, art *can* vs art *cannot* be taught (Elkins, 2001; Newall, 2019). The latter is usually associated with the argument that creativity is a fundamental human urge (Hickman, 2010). Accordingly, many advocacy reports deem various practical skills necessary from professional art school pedagogies (Slater et al., 2013; Allen & Rowles, 2016; Rowles, 2016), including networking, preparing CVs, pricing work, and how to fill out HMRC self-assessment forms[54], the latter being related to assumptions that artists will necessarily become self-employed. This label, seen as 'a category of the tax office, a state-imposed identification' (Kenning, 2018:6), is discerned as distinct from becoming an entrepreneur (ibid.). However, both are entangled with artists' identities. Being self-employed is considered 'something artists can maintain as separate from their artistic identity', and being an entrepreneur, as noted in chapter two, is thought to be 'embodied in a set of behaviours' which merge with identities at 'the most intimate, subjective level' (Kenning, 2018:6). Artists' identities are at stake in these debates,

[54] HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs) Self-Assessment is the UK system for collecting Income Tax and National Insurance from self-employed persons who are legally required to complete this annually to pay their tax contributions.

given that art schools also provision a 'rich source of resources' for 'identity work' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:135), and that skilling is entangled with this and the anticipation of accepted art-schooled artist identities by different stakeholders (curators, gallerists, the art world etc.).

Alternative fine art skills, and ways to teach them, have recently surfaced in pedagogical theory stemming from art schools/university art departments. Suggestions of more equitable pedagogies which encourage students to design/regulate personal curricula (Beech, 2014; Orr & Shreeve, 2018), or propose students and educators become closer equivalents (Baldacchino, 2015), appear to take identity work into account. There is also acknowledgement of the need to adopt new onto-epistemological (Barad, 2007, cited in jagodzinski 2018:83) modes of enquiry, and pleas for the 'reawakening of curiosity and wisdom' (jagodzinski, 2018:90), felt to have been lost in professional pedagogies. This is considered key if artist-students are to 'fabulate' in 'an incompossible New Earth'[55] (ibid.), enabling art schools to orientate artist-students towards becoming 'cosmic artisans' in the age of the post-human, post-anthropogenic, post-ontological Chthulucene (Haraway, 2015, cited in jagodzinski, 2018:83). Though a distinctly different approach to considering HMRC form filling, there is still some concession to these ideas. jagodzinski (2018:90) admits, whether new modes of enquiry are adopted or not, art educators (and I would add, artists) necessarily continue to 'toil within global capitalism's accounting system', a notable recognition among other considerations in the artists' recollections of skilling I outline next.

5.2.1 Art School Absorptions (ASA)

Skilling is an undeniably loaded term. When I discuss what the artists said of skilling I term it Art School Absorptions (ASA). This relates to the recurring core category of freedom in these artists' stories, highlighting a way of learning that entails choice and agency, rather than a way of *being taught*. This reflects one of my interview questions, which was *What did you take from art school?*, not, *What skills were you taught?* ASA is thus about the artists choosing what to take from their art schooling (and choosing what to tell me of this). Not as passive receivers, though sometimes they may have been, but as agents who chose what to digest, absorb, or regurgitate. Absorption relates

[55] Incompossible refers to that which seems 'paradoxical but mutually existent' (jagodzinski, 2018:85).

to the aspects of learning that the artists asserted they regulated, and denotes particular forms of acceptance and resistance to certain curricula and pedagogies. Though a term with analogous connotations, it relates to language used by the artists, and to this chapter's theme of *Reaction*, indicating transformation, deliberate osmotic learning, and unexpected or unforeseen metamorphoses. I avoid common binary valuations of these accounts of skilling as 'good/bad' or 'positive/negative', and instead give my interpretation of the value of the absorptions indicated by the artists.

Absorption is, of course, associated with education already, specifically in master-student scenarios common in 1960/70s UK art education (Newall, 2019), when it was regarded that 'a teacher has a certain kind of charisma, walks through the class and the student soaks up the air and the smell and that is how he (sic) learns' (Reardon & Mollin, 2009, cited in Orr & Shreeve, 2018:20, correction in original). More recently, it was still considered that a student is, 'absorbing the teacher's concept of art-ideas of what is of value in art which they use to guide their practice' (Newall, 2019:91). Though valid interpretations, they align absorption with ideas that students are empty (and passive) vessels. Whereas, the ASA I discuss reflect the artists' decisions around what to absorb. Perhaps my account demonstrates artist-students manipulating their own curricula, realising recent pedagogical visions that anticipate personalised learning (see Orr & Shreeve, 2018:7 & 143). However, given what I discuss shortly of difficulties with certain curricula/pedagogy, and that student satisfaction has been correlated with capacities to absorb (see El-Hilali et al. 2015), an artists' personal curricula has both self-regulated and emotional relevance. I group the ASA into five distinct(ish) areas[56], with some overlap between the groups. They are:

- Perspectival Shifts
- Visual, Verbal & Critical Perception, Communication & Defence
- Fabrication & Making
- Transferability & Employability
- Art World ASA

[56] Though these resemble anticipated outcomes found in some fine art programme documents (for example Goldsmiths, 2017), they are not directly informed by them, but are my interpretations of the artists' complex experiences of curricula.

5.2.1.1 Perspectival Shifts

The artists acknowledged becoming informed about societal, political, and personal issues, improving interrelationships with others, and gaining confidence. Having felt 'really ignorant' (P12:4483) beforehand, one said art school 'opened [their] mind to different viewpoints and world views' (P12:1025-1026), teaching them 'it's all about the way you engage with people' (P12:4438-4441). Another felt 'realigned', having gained a 'better perspective of the world' (P11:2242) from 'a strong feminist body' in their year group, through which they felt 'more informed' and 'more aware' (P11:2239-2252). Some developed empathy through acquiring an 'ability to see something from somebody else's perspective' (P8:2773-2774), adding they had 'a much broader understanding of lots of political and social concerns in terms of gender and race and…history' (P8:2778-2780). Another significant outcome was obtaining a particular way of thinking (P8:2936), or thinking differently to others (P12:3986), one artist saying they learnt 'things are constructed and can be perceived differently' (P8:2787). Greater belief in themselves and their work was also attained, either gaining explicit reassurance in their work (P7:1594), developing lasting confidence (P4:4823-4831), or feeling 'transformed' enough to do anything (P9:3722-3759). Others who felt enabled to do anything (P1:2643), also noted it was boundaried by being 'put in a box', through expectations created by the art school to see themselves as *only* artists (P1:2652-2657), an unobtainable ideal, reminiscent of discussions in chapter four, and one which foregrounds some of the tensions discussed later as generated from art school.

It is anticipated that art schooling will influence student's epistemological and ontological development (Baldacchino, 2015; Garoian, 2015 2017; jagodzinski, 2017, 2018). My findings show art schools achieving this goal, which is likely pleasing for curricula developers as important indicators of successes around skilling. However, credit was not always given to the art school, and the importance of peer-to-peer development is also significant. Additionally, I also consider that these testimonies are diffracted through longstanding mythic accounts of art's emancipatory role in which 'art and education seem to provide forms of critical growth and social empowerment' (Baldacchino, 2015:64). The artists' perspectival shifts are informed by these ideas, also perpetuating myths around art and transformation.

5.2.1.2 Visual, Verbal, & Critical Perception, Communication, & Defence

Developing talking and listening ability (P12:3883), and having space to purely think were highly valued. One artist considered this unique, recognising, 'I don't think there's…many spaces in education, which just give you some time to think' (P8:1311-1313). They also noted acquiring 'a way of seeing', was a 'big skill' that was 'so capitalisable on', capable of being 'transferred to other things' (P8:2917-2940). Though not explicitly referencing Berger's (1972) theory, its relevance is notable as they discussed their increased 'ability to engage with work' stemming from gaining a way of seeing, as well as enjoying better engagement 'especially with conversation' (P8:2787-2788). Another appreciated increased 'ability of talking about artwork proficiently' (P11:2243-2245), reminiscent of chapter four's discussion around learning specialised language (P7:1740).

Other studies centralise verbal skilling as how artist-students 'present and explain their work' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:26). In this study it was considered learning 'to defend your ideas' (P6:572). Indeed, fine art curriculum developers anticipate 'the ability to articulate a critical view and to defend one's own work are the key factors which demonstrate the ability to be a creative professional' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:81). This is largely delivered through the C/crit, a learning tool I discuss in-depth in section 5.3. This emphasis perhaps explains some of the artists feeling disproportionately educated in defence and criticality, with claims that, 'you're overly trained…at discussing and defending practice' (P8:1643), but after art school 'those kinds of skills' are 'toned down…made more constructive and passive' (P8:1649-1655), suggesting partial digestion/regurgitation of this absorption. As 'the public revealing of a private activity' (Moran, 2009:35), speaking about artworks was also met with discomfort. A concept I developed through my drawing as AMM (see figure 5, p.85), found through untangling my memories and gaining understanding of mutual challenges I had with some participants who preferred to retain privacy around personal content and let artworks speak for themselves (P4:1294-1423). The lasting influence of (Kant's) artistic genius, in which aesthetic and rational ideas are considered incompatible because 'aesthetic ideas are physical creations that no concept is adequate to explain' (Daichendt, 2012:65) is palpable alongside the frustrations in meeting the requirements of using words to position artworks, leaving some feeling particularly alienated.

5.2.1.3 Fabrication & Making

Abilities in outsourcing fabrication (P12:4990), and becoming 'like a producer of large-scale works' (P2:644), were professed as skills absorbed through art schooling. Otherwise, an overall lack of technical support was emphasised, challenging discourse that position technician's roles as 'increasingly the more stable part of a relationship in learning' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:80). Instead, access to workshops for one of the artists was considered 'heavily guarded' by unforthcoming technicians meaning they needed to 'find ways to communicate with those people' (P10:1540-1561). Others highlighted 'strict time limits for everything' (P7:4430), and constraints on equipment that was declared 'dangerous' (P7:438-444). Feeling limited by this compelled them to develop 'other types of work' using 'other materials' (P7:457-467), demonstrating the influence of environment on artistic processes.

Others claimed they 'took away a lot of technical skills', but caveated this was 'just through *doing*' (P11:2227-2228), claiming to be 'quite independent', knowing already 'how everything worked' (P11:3680-3683), also separating themselves from others they witnessed becoming necessarily 'impatient' because of ineffective support that failed to assess their needs (P11:3687-3698). These comments epitomise ASA in denying explicit technical teaching and claiming responsibility for their own making skills, as well as attributing value to '*doing*'. Others who refuted learning technical skills highlighted the art school's expectations of them to be self-led, saying it was offered as, "This facility's here…you have to go and find it", but blamed themselves adding they 'didn't' (P8:2795-2805). Another recalled a different attitude that was, "We do this. You come to us and you ask us to do this. You don't learn how to work wood"' (P10:1500-1502), corroborating other's concerns that artist-students 'don't learn professionally how to weld' or 'do woodwork' (P11:3775-3780).

There was a near total lack of acknowledgment that technical/making skills were taught or learnt, exemplified best by one artist's claim to making the 'same work' (P7:1735) at art school as beforehand, implying making ability/capacity was not changed through art schooling. The embedded claims of pre-possession of these skills conjures images of the gifted artist with innate creative aptitude (Soussloff, 1997). Whether learning by doing, or making by subscribing to instinctive talent, a conflation of skills appears,

highlighting the entanglement of these skills with myth and identity, where 'being taught' erodes common stories and threatens identities.

5.2.1.4 Transferability & Employability

Whether advocating that 'art school gives you a whole range of skills that are really applicable to…life in general' and 'other fields' (P6:463-469), feeling 'very unprepared' for 'getting a job' (P1:2010-2015), or asserting they had 'no transferable skills' (P10:2614), references to transferability were overt, and cultural values around instrumentalised education towards employment are underlying. Acknowledgments of transferability were also coupled with dissociation from instrumental curricula. One artist noted they became 'a lot more independent…and therefore, useful as an employee' (P8:2962-2991), while also questioning the necessity of art school's 'pragmatic approach' to 'train people to be able to make a living' (P8:1712-1713) and distancing themselves from having experienced this, deflecting conceivable instrumentalisation of their own education. Another recognised artist-students could learn 'skills which are transferable to employment' (P11:3713-3717), yet differentiated their motivation, claiming 'I didn't go to art school to make me more employable. In fact, going to art school's definitely made me less employable', rationalising they wanted to 'rebel more', finding it more 'difficult to conform' (P11:1393-1396). Employment non-conformity inspired by art school was also expressed elsewhere. One artist said becoming self-employed after graduating 'came through the art school experience' as something 'very anti-establishment' (P2:843-844). It encapsulated their 'not wanting to conform' or 'end up in a drudging nine-to-five' influenced by 'an atmosphere of poverty and of the pride that came with surviving on the brink…creating something out of nothing' (P2:845-882), again, conjuring mythic characterisations, especially of rebellious and starving artist tropes (see Becker, 1963; Røyseng et al. 2007).

These recognitions might both satisfy and trouble policymakers, curriculum designers, or transferability/employability evaluations. They will likely disturb those who consider it the 'rampant capitalisation of the mind' (Gillick, 2011:61) in a climate of increasingly instrumentalised education (Wheelahan, 2010; Belfiore & Upchurch, 2013) influenced by capitalism's need for 'continuous growth' in which 'the latest

addition to its ranks has been social and creative labour' (Cuenca, 2012). It is important to note one artist's reflection on the transferability of their art education, that, 'it's a shame that that's the way it's viewed…it should be a happy, kind of collateral…it might help you get a job, but that's not the reason that you're doing this stuff' (P8:3061-3079).

5.2.1.5 Art World ASA

Attending art school was felt to give some 'an edge' over non-art schooled artists[57] (P8:3004). This separation was associated with feeling able to 'wing it', stemming from tutor's recommendations that, '"If somebody offers you up an opportunity…you just think, "Yeah, I can do that," even if you know you can't. Just do it"' (P8:3008-3015). This advice they considered 'was right', adding, 'you can get away with it and wing it…learn it on the job' (P8:3019-3021). Others understood art school as 'being groomed, ready for the art world', specifically of 'what people expect from you', 'how you should behave', and 'what [the art school, and] the market wants' (P5:4973-4984). This preparation is akin to the grooming highlighted in chapter four, aligning artist-students' output with art world expectations of art school reputations. These recollections represent ASA that inscribed attitudes and values, and assimilated distinctive behaviours.

This is interconnected with professional development anticipations that art schools will 'familiarize apprentice artists with the worlds that they hope to one day join', providing artist-students with 'the skills necessary for overcoming the numerous competitive challenges' (Menger, 2014:149-50). While this is the aim, and partially corroborated by the artists' statements, the intention and effect sometimes appear at odds. Some felt let down by their BAs, realising during their MA that essential 'pragmatic stuff' (P10:3664) was missing around understanding the function of studios, and expectations around navigating networking. Though only knowable as useful a posteriori, others revealed similar thoughts and blamed art school for their not knowing 'how to rent a studio', navigate 'rent agreements' (P12:2138-2156), or understand legalities of contracts (P12:3475); skills felt necessary in ongoing practice. Interpretation is also

[57] Typically these artists are bracketed off as 'outsider' artists (Hall & Metcalf, 1994), considered both a disdainful term and a group created for further commodification, understood as 'the invention of an elite coterie, the totalizing enterprise of formally educated artists, collectors, critics, and dealers who often work to promote their own mythic beliefs, ideological agendas, and aesthetic self-interest' (Cubbs, 1994:86).

significant, one artist noting what others called 'soft skills' like 'problem solving' and 'thinking out of the box', were to them 'survival skills' they used to 'adapt anything in a given circumstance to something useful, to something that [they] need' (P2:935-939). These comments mostly challenge anticipated learning of idealised skillsets, including 'resilience', 'negotiating professional relationships', and 'networking' (Menger, 2014:150), discussed further next alongside the artists' views and experiences of professional development.

5.2.2 Perceptions of Professional Development

An extensive discourse exists on professional development in UK fine art courses, centring on both its delivery through embedded or distinct curricula (Rowles, 2016), and whether professional skillsets exist (Ferguson, 2009), and can be agreed upon (Birnbaum, 2009; Bauer, 2009). Others question whether artists should be 'professionally' developed at all, seeing 'art as a de-alienating endeavour that should not be subject to the division of labour and professional specialisation' (Bishop, 2012:3). Such views may stem from desires to protect art's specialness, that is discussed elsewhere as holding symbolic market value (Kenning, 2019:2), or to avoid the further collapse of art and artists into commodified products of neoliberalised capitalism attributed to professionalisation. It is possibly neither and both, but representative of a field in a state of 'incomplete professionalization' (Teather, 1990, cited in Paquette, 2012:11), encountering 'contradictory pressures, some pushing toward professionalization, others preventing it' (ibid.). Whether 'complete' professionalisation is attainable is arguable, however, other arguments suggest it is 'essential to provide a codified professional development program as part of a wholesome curriculum' (Louden, 2019). It is 'codified' to avoid instrumentalisation through ideas that, '"the market" is the dominant way for artists to make a living', considered, 'misleading at best and *completely* irresponsible at worst' and 'based on a flawed perception of what it takes to sustain a creative life' (Louden, 2019, original emphasis)[58]. What is clear, across the debates, is an evident distrust of the market, and continuing anxiety over the slippage of art education into becoming an incubator for

[58] Louden's comments come in reaction to the inaugural *MFA Fair* (2019) in NYC, calling itself the 'link between academia and industry' its purpose is to 'introduce [the] graduating class to the market' (The MFA Fair, 2019) by selling stand space to art schools who in turn sell this to their students.

creative industry workers, whose focus is on the production of a commodified art object that professional development programs are feared to perpetuate.

Artists in this study consistently aligned professional development with unattractive commodification and business practices they preferred not to identify with. This is echoed in other studies that indicate 'artists do not see themselves as entrepreneurs and regard associated business practices as unbecoming', that they, 'demand recognition through the works of art, but regard sales generated as a result of entrepreneurial behaviour as not providing artistic reputation or high-valued standing among their peers' (Wesner, 2018:36). Other accounts show artists deliberately distinguish ''commercial' from 'personal' work' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:26) as ways of maintaining reputations and protecting their artist identities. These concepts are significant in the following discussion which positions experiences of professional development alongside the recurring theme of navigating identities through art schooling. It perhaps helps to understand why ASA were not recognised as professional development, but instead were offered in resistance to acknowledging being explicitly professionally developed.

When I asked the artists about their experiences of professional development, the pattern of business alignment continued in their recognising professional skills as making websites (12:1983), contract writing (P6:1151), and writing a proposal or CV (P7:777). A key finding was that it was also heavily disparaged. This category was developed through drawing as AMM (see figure 6, p.85), revealing deep derision of professional development through the unravelling of my overlapping memories of my experiences of it at art school. I found, as noted in chapter two, it was seen as 'vulgar, to talk about the business end' (P6:1151), that, 'it was supposed to be…known, magically. But not actually taught' (P6:1161). As a 1990s graduate, this artist also perceived differences between themselves and recent graduates, claiming art schools 'now…make much more of an effort to teach professional development…we weren't as professionalised…it's probably gone a little too far into the direction of professionalising art students' (P6:1165-1184). They also described having minimal classes in professional development, recalling 'only…one session, for a couple of hours' (P6:1144-1146). Its nascence in 1990s art schooling perhaps

explains this, however, this perception prevailed across all graduate groups. A recent graduate disputed its existence entirely, not remembering 'any real discussion about it' (P12:1831). Others said 'it was not explicit' recalling 'there may have been one lecture on the business of art in the third year' (P2:404-405), and another stated 'there was never talk about what happens next' (P4:2921). Vague recollections of CV support (P1:1172-1182) and receiving the advice, 'as long as you're always thinking about your art, you're still an artist' (P1:1232-1234) were remembered by others. Another noted a 'bunch of workshops' conducted in 'some sort of half-ironic way' (P7:775-791) which was (ironically) considered unprofessional. They added they were not interested in how to 'advertise for myself, or making PR for myself' (P7:809-810), rejecting business-like practices. These comments indicate professional development was either forgotten, went unnoticed or unattended if delivered through specific classes, or was deliberately disavowed and disparaged during our conversations, conveying another aspect connected to ASA of control over learning and identification.

These assertions indicate selective self-regulation over professional identities, commensurate with other studies that show, 'knowledge, attributes and beliefs' at art school are 'taken up or rejected or modified to suit previously held positions…in pursuit of the student's individual version of a professional identity' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:81). The artists absorbed and rejected according to their preferred image of an artist based on imagined possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), which appears to be one that eschews formal professionalisation. Undertaking professional development, or being perceived to have, is entangled with their professional identities, and a particular form of self-identification, which surfaced when our conversations focussed on experiences of this curricula activity. In order to protect these identities from being perceived as something considered unbecomingly business-like, commodified, and vulgar, they denied having been affected by professional development. Even if a changing perception[59], artists are often characterised as rejecting commodification, profit motives, and business practices (Bourdieu, 1993; Svensson, 2015; Banks 2017). I draw attention to particular forms

[59] Typical characterisations around artists' approaches to business practices etc., are discussed further in chapter six.

of resistance to certain art school pedagogies, instituted by the artists' professional identification and protection. This is not to absolutely reject professionalising (Brown & Hackett, 1991:18), but as part of ongoing de/reconstruction processes of professionalisation and identifications. Next, I consider how this filtered through the artists' ways of learning and becoming.

5.3
Ways of Learning | Ways of Becoming
UNSPOKEN THINGS & UNWRITTEN RULES

In this section I outline structured and unforeseen ways of learning through art schooling. I discuss an explicit curricula device, the 'C/crit' (shorthand for group critique) highlighting tensions in formulations of identities through 'The Group' (Day, 2012) and the upholding of this unique learning means as part of myth preservation. As well, I consider a student-driven way of learning which was termed *Osmotically Learning* by the artists, describing a necessarily self-regulated activity foregrounding the artists' agentic navigations of their freedoms over their education. This leads me on finally to examine structurelessness, or freedom-as-pedagogy, revealing struggles around certain (mythologised) freedoms and a prevalence of marginalisation and exclusion. I begin by situating the discussion around significant pedagogical ideas.

5.3.1 Pedagogical Concepts

Total creative immersion was an anticipation from art schooling discussed in chapter four. The possibilities immersion might entail are questioned in pedagogical theory, which asks, 'in what and with whom are we immersed? Is this an immersion into knowing, meaning, doing, learning, unlearning...? In other words, what does this immersion really imply?' (Baldacchino, 2015:69). The pedagogical theories I situate here abandon arguments around skilling, addressing instead how relevant onto-epistemologies are incorporated and assimilated into becoming through art education.

Freire's (1996, cited in Newall, 2019:9) constructivist refrain, 'to teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge' is frequently postulated in studies on art school pedagogy. Newall (2019:10) considers a constructivist approach facilitates 'student's own construction of

knowledge', adding, it does not provide 'a perfect model of understanding all teaching, but is well-attuned to the nature of teaching in art schools'. Elsewhere, concerns over art pedagogy's paradigmatic de/repositioning suggest it must reject 'constructivist assumptions that have turned art and education into transactional instruments' (Baldacchino, 2015:62), favouring instead Herner Saeverot's (2013) *Indirect Pedagogy*, which 'implies that artists and educators are more or less equivalent—as artists ± educators' (Baldacchino, 2015:75). Other critiques of constructivist pedagogy conclude, 'it is concerned primarily with producing knowledge and skills needed in the economy and the broader purposes of education are subordinated to this goal' sacrificing 'complexity and depth of knowledge' (Wheelahan, 2010:5). Pedagogic work is viewed by others as an 'ongoing process of intra-relating, a series of material entanglements through which what we call teachers and learners emerge' (Atkinson, 2015:43) referencing Barad's (2007) onto-epistemological approach. An approach also recommended by jagodzinski (2018:90-92) who advises that in the Anthropocene, 'the educational task is no longer…to further 'emancipation' as it has been forwarded by such thoughtful thinkers as Paolo Freire and Jacques Rancière', but is to 'orientate students to such a post-anthropology and a post-ontology'. There is also the question of whether art and education are compatible at all (Baldacchino, 2015:62), and 'whether art and education are forced to be each other's dummies or whether one takes control of the other' (ibid.:70).

These concepts challenge and propose realignment of power relations between students, teachers, and art schools, which are also prevailing notions in my findings. Whether through recommendations that art school pedagogies can be understood as sites of unlearning (Baldacchino, 2018), as prostheses that constitute ways of knowing and being through the body's somatic intra-relations (Garoian, 2015), or based on 'the breakdown of teacher/pupil hierarchy' (Bishop, 2012:267), these pedagogical concepts extend similar messages. They discredit outdated (constructivist) models and take art education into new onto-epistemological positionings. They abandon employability and market orientation, for pedagogies offering art students greater independence from institutional hierarchies, and the educational stasis of longstanding teleological existence, so that art education can perhaps again be experienced as 'a countercultural experience' (Dion, 2009, cited in Bishop, 2012:269). The influence of these

pedagogical concepts and the artists' experiences that touch on these are diffused through the following discussion, with the C/crit as the foreground next.

5.3.2 The C/crit

The C/crit is a standard, though not standardised, mode of learning in British art schools that since the 1950s has amassed pedagogical significance (Moran, 2009:37). Crippa (2015:134-135) attributes this to a number of factors including a tradition of intellectual debate in British art academies, the introduction of the Coldstream Report in 1960 (Coldstream, HMSO, 1960), Bauhaus teaching methods, and moving from 'figuration to abstraction'. It is described as 'a key site for the creation of value' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:40), where 'judgments, perceptions and analysis deliver sublime insights, understanding, comprehension and success' (Day, 2012), and 'one of the most distinctive, notorious and influential teaching formats in British art schools' (Crippa, 2015:135). It is also considered 'an exercise of power over the student' (Madoff, 2009:274), as fostering 'a bullying environment of survival of the fittest', like a 'bear pit of posturing, not a learning tool' (Garfield, 2012, cited in Newall, 2019:30), and as posing 'special difficulties for female students' (Newall, 2019:124).

The artists' recollections of C/crits occasioned an emotional embeddedness that appeared unconstrained, with detailed descriptions of harsh (P9:662), horrendous (P1:919), and gruelling (P6:591) ordeals. Indeed, emotions are understood to exert particular effects on what is remembered, modulating the 'memory search process' especially of negative arousal (Kensinger & Kark, 2018). One artist condemned the 'critiquing system', as 'way too harsh and not supportive of creative instinct at all', and as a test of strength, 'if you can survive being that battered repeatedly through those years and still go on to keep making your work' (P2:1292-1298). This comment contains undertones of survivor's resilience as well as ongoing distress. Another recalled tutors 'just slagged you off' (P1:915-932), and others said C/crits were 'a bit of a waste of time' questioning 'what does it really mean, anyway?' (P3:755-832). C/crits were also posited as sites of competitive display, that were 'like going ten rounds with a heavyweight', but, that 'the ethos, the ideology of it was preparing you' (P9:662-665). Some found them 'highly aggressively critical', because of certain student-types who had 'the intention that it should be so' who 'bring it with them' and

'enact it' (P8:619-626). Performed criticality is understood as an aspect of C/crits (Crippa, 2015), where 'students are expected to present and perform' (Day, 2012).

Others described barriers to participation, centring on alienation and marginalisation. One recalled, 'I just stayed incredibly silent' admitting being 'frightened by it and intimidated' (P12:1117-1123). Some recalled C/crits were 'really vicious', and particularly 'notorious for…middle-class male, students…going to all the sessions and really ripping people apart' (P6:562-567). Male-orientated/dominated environments were also experienced by others who recalled 'boys…sat manspreading at the back' (P8:686-688) making obtuse comments, which was unsettling yet accepted as C/crit culture. Another noted they 'had a whole year of white people from the home counties' and questioned 'how is that useful?', speculating,

> If you don't have a diverse…group of positions on a course [where] the fulcrum of the course is conversation…the C/crit is the way that we learn. What are these people going to teach each other? The same voices, the same perspective…if I'm the diversity that's happening here, and I grew up in Surrey, you have a big problem'
>
> (P10:4073-4142)

These comments highlight the fostering of macho middle-class white cultures, indicated in other studies to create particular barriers to inclusion and learning (see Hayton et al., 2015; Hatton, 2019). This problem is not new, nor exclusive to art schools, indeed, 'curriculum isn't innocent - it reflects the values of those who produce it and the wider context within which it is produced' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:42). Assertions that (white, middle-class) male-centred aggression in C/crits 'is dying away in many places' (Newall, 2019:160) are conflated, and instead recent decolonising calls by those challenging 'pale, male, stale' syllabuses (Asquith, 2015, cited in Orr & Shreeve, 2018:42) are bolstered. Either way, the power of 'The Group' (Day, 2012) that ensures the 'individual becomes subservient to the whole' (ibid.), remained evident in my interviews.

Conversely, C/crits were also considered stimulating and valuable. Their notoriety was prized (P6:562), seen as 'brutal, but…great' (P9:625). One artist recognised some were 'probably damaged by that', adding, 'I'm not nostalgic about it…I try not to be

sentimental…but I really enjoyed it', reasoning that 'sometimes, it was somebody who was with profile' and it was 'part of…preparation for your exit' (P9:646-692). Being seduced by tutor's reputations as well as being perceived as enduring brutality underlies this. Harsh criticism was accepted in order to 'hone skills' (P1:963), and others claimed viciousness 'teaches you how to defend your ideas in a really comprehensive way' reflecting that 'this business you're getting into, is tough. And if you want to survive it, this can't faze you too much' (P6:572-588). Others concluded tutors were not 'intentionally horrible', but tried to 'get the best out of you…to make you…focus and really work out what it was that you were trying to achieve' (P12:1518-1556). Another considered C/crits 'make you invest…in your work…everything's questioned…you have to be responsible and ready with an answer', but to survive you must 'leave your feelings a little bit to one side' (P8:708-747), demonstrating a coping strategy that may have helped at the time, but given the emotional content of the recollections, may not provide long-term protection/resilience.

Nevertheless, the artists took pride in the C/crit's requisite to be resilient; they are survivors of its notorious brutality. Their complicity in seeking and upholding this is also demonstrable. Although challenging, it is defended as valuable preparation. Though, I question whether being prepared for a boxing match (P9:662) is a realistic expectation to foster. Rather, the testimonies of viciousness also infer maintenance of art school specialness, interconnected with myth making that is driven by such anecdote (Soussloff, 1997). The perpetuation that brutality prepares artists for the supposed brutality of the art world, perpetuates its continuation in an autopoietic loop, becoming part of the story of art school C/crits and of what artists need to survive the art world. That C/crit brutality remains the domain of art schools is exemplified when they are staged outside of art schooling by C/crit providers[60]. These C/crits are deliberately less aggressive, consciously 'neutral, supportive and anti-hierarchical' (Peer Sessions, 2020). Engagement with these C/crits is thought to be motivated by a desire to 'work and live as if they're still at art college' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:62). However, while artists appear to want to reproduce art school environments, it is actively avoided.

[60] I use the term 'C/crit providers' to describe the range of organisations (see Engine ChatChat at SVAF (2020), Peer Sessions (2020), Q-Art (2020), and Studio Critique (2020)) which provide C/crit-like group discussions based on art school C/crits, among wider support. These are (mostly) open to undergraduates, postgraduates, and non-art schooled artists, sometimes fees apply and others are free.

Instead, they were experienced as less 'forced' (P3:915), and 'reassuring' places to be 'still in contact with people that were…making art and still thinking about things' (P7:1495-1497), where they came to feel, 'if you take all the aggression out of it, and…frame that question in a constructive way, it's massively valuable' (P8:1673-1679). Even so, this artist still emphasised, 'I haven't encountered that level of in-depth criticality of my work outside of college' (P8:724-726), upholding the uniqueness of the art school C/crit.

Undoubtedly, art school C/crits leave special marks on artists, as their identities are entangled with their artwork (Bain, 2005). Criticism 'can occasion genuine anguish' (Newall, 2019:121) under assessments that encompass, 'marginalising, excluding that which [art schools] do not understand' in order to 'confirm that which [they] do' (Atkinson, 2002:118), leaving some students feeling especially alienated. Furthermore, as a 'rite of passage for students to be publicly recognised as fully formed artists' (Crippa, 2015:135), professional status is constructed through the public performance of 'the artist' which is subjected to conveyance as a 'confident, assertive and self-defined individual' (ibid.:134), and accordingly 'awarded as a community' (Day, 2012), or not. The C/crit ensures a way of learning that underscores a way of becoming. Its enduring effect on professional identity is exemplified in comments like, 'now, in my career, when someone criticises what I do, I'm not really that bothered…I've gone through that harsh C/crit process' (P1:2402-2412). Nevertheless, pedagogies predicated on students learning to challenge 'the ideologies of institutionalized learning' facilitating 'agency' and 'critical citizenship' (Garoian, 1999:57), perhaps reason, even encourage, some of C/crit's admonishments. Though, preserving their specialness is entangled with attitudes, where criticality is 'a stance, a pose, a contrivance' (de Duve, 1994:29), this impacts on artists' identities that are also considered unique and different (Taylor & Littleton, 2012). The maintenance of this is interconnected with mythologised images of the exceptional artist (Kris & Kurz, 1979 [1934]) and might be advanced through preserving pedagogical specialness as distinctive to artists' unique education, another aspect of which is discussed next.

5.3.3 Osmotically Learning: Becoming-Osmotic

Osmotically learning was a term used by the artists to describe non-curricula ways of learning, which also conveyed a capacity for certain freedoms and autonomy over their learning. In biology osmosis is 'a special type of diffusion, namely the diffusion of water across a semipermeable membrane' (Stillwell, 2016), a watery association I return to shortly. In educational studies, osmosis often implies hierarchically imparted knowledge (Caro, 1996, cited in Crippa, 2015:137) from 'master' to students, where, 'learning by osmosis' sees the 'teacher as exemplar' in the tradition of the 'masterclass' (Ocean, n.d. cited in Newall, 2019:107). This educational model, prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s (Newall, 2019) is reminiscent of discourse around absorption, which problematically positions students as neophytic depositories. Education conceived on these bases tend not to recognise 'the teacher and student as co-creators' (Lupton, 2013:161, cited in Orr & Shreeve, 2018:9), and commonly 'subordinates learning to teaching' (Cattegno, 1971, cited in Atkinson, 2012). While the artists acknowledged learning through master-student formats via tutorials and talks programs, assertions of osmotic learning centred on peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, incidental, hidden, and equivalent learning that were specifically sought, self-regulated, and (felt) independent of explicit curricula activity.

One artist described becoming 'aware of…learning…osmotically…by being surrounded by certain people and being given access to people', adding that, 'anyone who was doing a show in London' contributed to the 'exemplary' artists' talks programme at their art school (P10:1031-1041). Their environment incorporated suitably osmotic parts they could imbibe and soak up. They also sought osmotic learning through collaborating on events with peers from other art schools whose courses 'had a module about being public', meaning they 'were osmotically learning from them' asking them 'what do you do to be public?...how do you tell people that there's a show on?...what do you do? (P10:2719-2749). These osmotic situations were actively initiated to acquire particular knowledge. Another artist, who 'became aware of certain things through osmosis', recalled 'there were…women there, who were sleeping with quite powerful artists and they would then get opportunities that started with that' (P6:1057-1061). They associated osmosis with gaining understanding of hidden elements of the 'business' they were getting into; this was not taught, but

discovered. In learning 'this person is…the relative of a famous philosopher' they concluded 'the path was being cleared for him regardless of the quality of his work' (P6:1065-1068), and likened this revelation to 'the Wizard of Oz, when you look behind the curtain and…it's not the great and the powerful' (P6:1072-1075), finding this 'useful…to see how it worked' and 'how people operate' (P6:1079-1097).

Elsewhere, incidental and hidden ways of learning were described. One artist was aware, 'the course structure teaches you [professional practice], or imparts that knowledge' (P10:2050-2053) implicitly. Others recognised their art school's 'aims or ethos' were 'not a fiction, but it's never explicitly said' (P8:2074-2075). Another described their studio as an unforeseen site of collaboration and discovery; a 'free project space' where, with others, they were 'jigsawing holes in the walls' and 'carved up the fabric of the building' (P2:346-349). These intra-actions explored hidden boundaries of making that flexed the prescribed studio edges, and offered up unexpected reserves of materials for reuse, meaning the studio felt 'furtive' (P2:616-626). Discovering and making in this way is reminiscent of Annette Krauss's (2007) *Hidden Curriculum* project which investigated 'in-between or non-spaces…the gaps within the building that are not used, inconvenient, uncomfortable, forbidden and hidden', revealing 'unrecognised and unintended forms of knowledge accompanying the official learning processes'. These unregulated, surreptitious explorations were positioned as an important self-regulated part of this artist's learning.

To understand the artists' references to osmotic/incidental/hidden learning, I return to the watery connotations of biological osmosis, and consider this analogy alongside Garoian's (2017) interpretation of Deleuze's (1994) concept of swimming in signs. Like the swimmer who becomes-wave in learning how to swim, in osmotically learning, the artist-student becomes-osmotic. Garoian (2017:6-8) notes,

> In becoming-wave, the swimmer does not reproduce the wave by 'doing as it does,' or reproduce the didactic 'do as I do' directives…. On the contrary, in becoming-wave, the swimmer learns to swim by entering into an immersive encounter with the anomalous, problematic field of the wave.

The water and the swimmer intra-act upon each other in an immersion that institutes the doing of swimming. At art school, artist-students intra-act among individuals, 'The Group' (Day, 2012), the hidden, and incidental, in immersions that establish the doing of learning and making. Having been initially motivated by flow experiences, osmotic 'flow' is also influential to the learning described above. In biological osmosis, flow occurs between a 'lower solute concentration to one of higher solute concentration' (Ozer & Brazy, 2009), which happens 'almost instantaneously across a membrane' (Feher & Ford, 1995), if semipermeable and not selective (Stillwell, 2016). In this case, who or what (artist-students, the art school, tutors, peers) is of the 'lower/higher concentration' is not expressly clear, nor static, but what is notable is, to experience osmotic flow/learning, one becomes-osmotic among others who are osmotic. Becoming-osmotic regulates and directs *indirect* ways of learning at art school. While perhaps considered non-explicit curricula activity by the artists, as discussed further in chapter seven, osmotically learning has been absorbed to an extent into higher education policy, influencing students' thinking that they teach themselves (Orr & Shreeve, 2018). However, what is significant about osmotically learning is the underlying need for artist-students to regulate their learning, as part of their needs around self-regulation. This is an issue that also surfaces through structureless pedagogies.

5.3.4 Structurelessness: Freedom & Marginalisation

Structureless pedagogy is key to art school programs which specify that 'central to the development of an artistic practice is the freedom to set your own goals and parameters' (UAL, 2017a), where courses are 'structured to encourage increasing independence of thinking' (Slade School of Fine Art, 2019). This approach is also questioned by educators who ask, 'what kind of education, if any, can take place in an environment where…the freedoms allowed to students…have become almost unlimited?' (Newall, 2019:2). A focus of the core category of freedom developed through these findings foregrounds what the artists said of structurelessness and its cultivation of independent working. In particular, I centralise the surfacing of tensions around marginalisation and exclusions related to ideals and mythologised freedoms perpetuated through this pedagogical format, a theme I found through drawing as AMM processes, and which

has been developed as a central concept of the thesis, introduced here and analysed further in chapter seven.

One artist recalled having 'no structure, no classes, no nothing' (P1:523), where they 'could just do anything, think anything, be anything', which was 'also quite scary' (P1:3075-3080). They blamed their being young for not attending classes in an environment in which 'nothing was compulsory' (P1:112). However, after an exchange within a structured art school, they realised they wanted the 'freedom' and 'the time' (P1:815) structurelessness afforded (as noted in chapter four). This conflicted relationship, of enjoying the liberation presented by structurelessness, yet, feeling constricted by a need for more direction was also experienced elsewhere. Another artist dismissed an exchange because of too much structure (P10:2961), highlighting their 'resistance to…structured courses' (P10:2946-2951). However, although they avoided structure, they also found structurelessness difficult to traverse. They recalled 'wanting something, but not knowing how to talk about what it was that I wanted…though the resources were there, I didn't know how to ask for them' (P10:2833-2940).

I found navigating structurelessness carried particular challenges, including being unable to participate and feeling culpable for this. Applicable issues that critics of organisational structurelessness have problematised include that, 'informal' structures mean 'the rules of how decisions are made are known only to a few and awareness of power is limited to those who know the rules', and that, 'those who do not know the rules and are not chosen for initiation must remain in confusion' (Freeman, 1970). Negotiating inaccessible systems/structures is reminiscent of charges levied at professional art worlds too (Becker, 1982; McRobbie, 2016), and are understood parameters of becoming professional. Indeed, systems of exclusion/inclusion are acknowledged between occupational groups (Evetts, 2012), as well as presenting particular challenges for novices in processes of professionalisation around learning rules of engagement (Nicolini & Roe, 2014). Some artists called for more transparency around structure, claiming their 'learning…suffered' (P10:924) as a result of not knowing what the structures were. Others claimed awareness of the intention behind structurelessness, having been told by tutors,

> The reason we're not giving you any structure…is we're trying to teach you to be artists. When you leave here…you're just going to be an artist…so we're teaching you to be self-sufficient'.
>
> (P1:1119-1259)

Structurelessness is perceived as intended to promote the independence and self-sufficiency needed to be an artist, even if narrowly defined as 'only' this. Others recognised it to mean, 'you have to impose a structure on yourself', but added that this was 'the biggest general challenge for people…that you have to provide your own structure, you have to be working towards something and motivate yourself to do it…it's really difficult, actually' (P8:1098-1111).

However, potential freedoms afforded by structurelessness were hampered by other constrictions. Some commented that 'anything feminine or abject' was 'bashed out of us' by male tutors, 'in quite a misogynistic way' (P2:1105-1112), claiming they were anticipated to make 'big, dry, masculine works' (P2:1116-1118). Another described making 'formal objects' so as not to 'annoy anyone' (P11:2414-2419), creating 'big, heavy, sculpture' (P11:2548) because that was what the art school accepted of them. Common here are expectations of making particular kinds of art objects, akin to the 'signature practice' (McGonagle, 2007, cited in Whelan & Ryan, 2018:53) discussed in other studies which 'cultivates and sustains…the genius myth' (Whelan & Ryan, 2018:53), assuming art making as an object-centred solo endeavour. Structurelessness acts as a thin veil for cultivating certain freedoms, appearing to also perpetuate myths, expectations, and ideals, and with that, particular constrictions. A different artist realised they 'didn't feel any freedom' due to feeling 'so…hemmed in by external concerns' (P6:3292-3294). They described an emotionally difficult time as 'really hard' and 'very alienating', where they 'dealt with a lot of racism, not only from other students, but from tutors, combined with sexism, and the obvious classism, as well' (P6:512-517). This is a disturbing recollection, replicated in varying degrees by other artists in this study (P2:1105; P5:2382; P8:686; P10:4073; P11:2414), and discussed more widely as pervasive in art school education (Hayton et al., 2015; Asquith, 2015; Hatton, 2019). The freedoms afforded by art school structurelessness are boundaried by personal and social circumstance. Participation is dependent on an artist-students' capacity to create their own structure and afforded to those who can formulate ways of

navigating its potential freedoms, but, is often unequally attainable. Structurelessness effectively equates to having only one choice, which means no choice, where artist-students become responsible for everything, including navigating how to participate. It does not go unnoticed that this pedagogical construct also feeds into the model of the individualised creative worker required of the CCI workforce (McRobbie, 2016:67).

The artists' encounters of erosions of freedom over making, stemmed from a combination of structurelessness, social position, and anticipated vs actual engagement, leaving them feeling marginalised and unable to participate. Some of this is perhaps a by-product of assessment systems reminiscent to that experienced in C/crits, where, '[art]work is recognised and valued according to a set of criteria…which by implication include and exclude' creating, 'a restriction in production' (Atkinson, 2002:119-120). Nevertheless, there is an evident tension in the anticipated freedoms granted by structurelessness. Instead of offering equitable freedoms, artists feel only 'free enough to operate within an academic setting' that 'appear[s] to be unstructured' (Baldacchino, 2012:xix). Structurelessness can be understood as that which 'sustains a tension between freedom and structure, control and agency' (Bishop, 2012:267). Though, there is also recognition that through 'this tension' one *can* 'learn self-discipline' (ibid.:266), echoed by the artist who noted,

> The students bring this idea with them, and together, they create something that's constantly renewing itself every year, because there's so little input, there's so little structure.
>
> (P8:2108-2116)

5.4
The Negation of the Art School

WE DIDN'T NEED ART SCHOOL, WE DID IT OURSELVES

Throughout this chapter, the artists' resistance to particular pedagogy and assertions of self-ledness around autonomous learning and making are notable. In this section, I discuss this through the key category *The Negation of the Art School*, developed through my performative inquiry during Axial coding, permitting my recognition of particular actions asserted in the artists' speech, and a category which is interrelated

with the core categories of freedom, myth, and identity. Badiou (2007) suggests negation has two parts; 'destruction', which is, 'the complete disintegration of an old world', and 'separation', which is being 'oriented by the possibility of something which exists absolutely apart from what exists'. Separately, I view the artists' acts of negation and assertions of self-ledness respectively as destructions and separations. Together, I consider their active intention towards autonomous self-regulation and collapsing representations in artistic myth, highlighting interplays of power, control, and agency between themselves and the art school over definition of certain artistic and professional identities[61]. A concept detailed here and developed in chapter seven when discussing the core category of freedom.

Through combined acts of negation and assertions of self-ledness, the artists deliberately denied the art school's authority/validation of identities that were co-constructed through these educational settings, which are also entangled with art school's institutional weight. These are termed 'pedagogised identities'[62] by Atkinson (2002:119), a term I adopt and build on going forwards. Opposition may stem from resistance to art schools' position as organisations of the wider art institution (Berthod, 2017), and their determining of 'certain behaviour as permissible or obligatory' (Stahl, 2001:350), or as sites of professional identity work (Taylor & Littleton, 2012), which require 'constraining one's repertoire of conducts' and submitting to 'the profession's authority' (Nicolini & Roe, 2014:67). These ideas, that are entangled with the key themes underpinning the thesis, inform discussion throughout this section, beginning with the artists' acts of negation.

5.4.1 Acts of Negation: Destruction

Negation has already featured in this study. Chapter four's expressions of luck and always being an artist (and belief in inherent creative talent) displaced the art school's validating powers, and in this chapter, rejections of certain curricula activity, and assertions of osmotically learning diminish the art school's jurisdiction over learning. These negations, and those discussed here, question art school's influence over creative

[61] The separation of these identities - 'artistic' and 'professional' - is discussed further in the following chapters.
[62] While I introduce pedagogised identities here, in chapters six and seven these form part of deeper analysis.

capabilities, career prospects, and identities. One artist noted, 'I didn't really graduate thinking 'I'm an artist'' (P3:3573), rather, they would determine this by ongoing involvement in at least 'two or three things…each year' (P3:3573-3612). Continuing to consider themselves an artist was contingent on a future possible self (Markus & Nurius, 1986) that included sustaining particular participation. Another disparaged art schooled 'personal development', stating 'I developed as an artist after I left…I don't think it was very useful for that at all' (P5:2141-2144), emphasising their personal role and art school's ineffectiveness in this area, adding, 'a lot of art is down to experience' (P5:2164-2165). Others said, 'in terms of something that helps you with a career, I don't think that's what it was' (P1:2441), and another highlighted, 'there's no preparation…nobody knows…what to do…or how to carry on' (P4:3611-3616). These artists suggest art school did not help their personal/artistic development nor (immediate/long-term) careers.

Others indicated their art school's lack of influence, asserting they were, 'still, sort of, the same person', doing, as noted earlier, 'the same work as before the degree' (P7:1734-1740), which disavows improvement or development through art schooling. Other disavowals came when I asked the artists what they took from art school. Though a question that could lead them to consider they must have taken something, answers included, 'I don't know really…I don't know if it's specifically to do with art school, but I think- just, to think critically about what is presented to you' (P12:3833-3836). Though appearing unwilling to acknowledge the art school, their hesitation may also represent a desire to project 'a particular kind of learner in the eyes of others' (Atkinson, 2002:116). Given that learner identities are constructed through/for assessment processes (ibid.), during the interview a conveyed identity would have been influenced by what felt 'identity congruent in the moment' (Oyserman et al., 2017:144). They are perhaps aware that critical thinking is something art schooled artists possess, and are assessed on (and that I might want to hear that, given my question), but, they withhold recognition from the art school, instead diminishing its authority while projecting sovereignty over their ability.

Another artist centred negations on denouncing learned criticality (P8:832). Having been repeatedly asked by tutors 'Why are you doing this?' (P8:3592-3598), they

explained, 'it is in the unlearning…I do as I bloody well please…I'm not interested in a gallery career…I'm interested in developing my practice' (P8:3602-3608). This rejection of art schooled criticality was intended to overcome self-interrogation that they felt impeded their graduate practice. It also reclaims criticality. Indeed, 'critical value' has been listed as 'vital', along with art's 'intrinsic', 'instrumental' and 'economic value', to 'promote the necessity of art in society and therefore its central place in formal education' (Kenning, 2013). This statement was given in a paper at *What's the Point of Art School?* conference at Central St. Martins School of Art (2013). I don't dispute art's societal necessity, and my question isn't 'What's the point of art school?'. Instead, I ask; why continually promote art's central place in education if it also constitutes deeper instrumentalising of art as learning, confining art's values (pedagogic and economic) further towards transactional autocratic economies? Rather, might it be more appropriate to consider art and education's compatibility under indirect pedagogies where 'pedagogical practice cannot be other than a refusal of teleology' acknowledged as a 'paradox that comes closest to articulate art's specificity' (Baldacchino, 2015). Though this engages 'art for art's sake' (Mirza, 2006; Belfiore & Bennett, 2008) discourse, instilling specialness and feeding illusions of art's separateness from social, economic, and even educational instrumentalism; separation is impossible. The untethering of art from education, and from its teleology of 'learning or earning' (Baldacchino, 2015:77), understood to be neoliberally instituted (Pendrell & Trafford, 2017), is entangled with these negations.

The image of the rebellious artist, disobediently rejecting social codes of conduct is not new. Alienation and alienating oneself has become mythologised as a character trait (Bain, 2005). The deviant outsider dismisses social convention (Becker, 1963, 1982), escapees of capitalism eschew commodification and markets (Banks, 2007), and rejecters of economic capital bolster symbolic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), increasing economic capital after all (Svensson, 2015). These images support myths that are expected to be upheld as markers of artistic identities (Bain, 2005). Furthermore, opposition in art school is discussed as 'resistance to scholarship' to preserve the 'integrity of practice' (Tynan & New, 2009:296), and a *not-fitting-in* with 'the confines of research' (Daichendt, 2012), or avoiding commodifying curricula (Bauer, 2009) such as explicit professional practice. Elsewhere, critical pedagogies are

reasoned as instilling critique of the art school (/art world) (Garoian, 1999; Kenning, 2019), inspiring resistance that is seen as a pedagogical success when achieved. Negation of the art school is perhaps to be expected then. However, when coupled with assertions of self-ledness, I consider negation as a proclamation of an impossible self and part of ongoing identity work in reaction to pedagogised identities, which are marred by marginalisation and exclusions (Atkinson, 2002:119), that the artists seek to overcome and reclaim.

5.4.2 Asserting Self-Ledness: Subtraction

Like negation, my findings that artists frequently related self-ledness with their art education is perhaps inevitable. After all, 'student autonomy in general is a public-education priority' (Cannatella, 2018:43) affecting art education among other disciplines (see Raya & Vieira, 2011; Lamb, 2012). However, self-discipline deliberately developed through art schooling is differentiated from other subjects by beginning 'at the start of a course' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:115). Art schools actively 'invite students to find their own voice rather than take on the normative behaviour pattern inscribed in ongoing academic practices' (Crippa, 2015:146), and successful learners are ones who demonstrate 'independent self-motivated studio practice' (UAL, 2017a) and exercise 'self-determined' making (Goldsmiths, 2017). With these pedagogical aims in effect, I add to the discourse, by positioning self-ledness as an essential counterpart to negation in forging a separated existence from the art school (like Badiou's (2007) 'subtraction' introduced earlier). I consider the artists' statements of self-ledness to be both promotions of self-starting identities (art schooled or otherwise/mythologised), and statements that deliberately counter pedagogised identities to engender negation.

Self-ledness, though somewhat distinctive, is interconnected with self-directed learning prevalent in art schooling. Willer (2018) considers this policy-driven, due to demands placed on art schools since their subsumption into universities and an emphasis on students' defence of their work. He claims, 'the study of art had to be more self-directed to justify the awarding of degrees', meaning art schools 'fell upon an ideal of master-less education' leading to 'an environment in which anything goes; but 'anything goes' really means…anything but dedicated practice' (ibid.:44). Willer believes this policy-driven self-ledness is disruptive to practice. In contrast, others

consider it the progressive result of pedagogy designed to develop independent thinking and doing (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:112-115), linked to somewhat hidden teaching in fine art where the ‘‘no brief’ brief’ (ibid.:112) means ‘the tutor becomes someone who does not teach; [students] see their learning as self-taught…and the teaching becomes invisible’ (ibid.:143) (akin to *Osmotically Learning*). While I acknowledge both policy (that drove art school’s into teleological situations within universities), and pedagogical strategies (such as structurelessness), influence the instilling of independent thinking, these discourses also pit them opposition. A bifurcation seemingly used to justify which has the most influential powers over artists’ thinking and doing (see Crippa 2014).

The artists’ assertions of self-ledness surfaced in numerous ways. Some discussed self-initiating meetings with tutors (P8:2134-2152) or actively seeking support (P1:1263), setting up as self-employed post art school (P2:758), and organising self-led exhibitions (P7:1009). Among the comments, self-ledness was also considered somewhat innate. One artist highlighted, ‘self-led projects…coming up with your own brief and following it, came very naturally to me…so that wasn’t really a problem’ (P2:219-222). This positions self-ledness as a pre-existent/self-acquired attribute instead of one learned at art school. Others echoed this, claiming, ‘I’ve always, sort of, [been] self-sufficient in that way, of just getting to show my work’ (P7:1064-1070). These remarks also allude to the artists seeing themselves as ‘single-authors’ (Bishop, 2012) of their practice and exposure. However, acknowledgements of self-ledness also extended beyond autonomous claims, towards recognition of collective organisation. One participant described the student body’s influence on the direction of study, experiencing that it ‘moves as the student’s progress, each year’ (P8:2116). Another stated their ‘year group would self-direct a show…and then the next year group would follow on’, which ‘tended to follow through a few years’ (P2:278-282). They continued later that,

> The flavour of what we learnt as students in that period was resilience, self-starting, how to create something out of nothing. Whether that’s how to create an artwork out of nothing, further your ideas with a limited budget, or create a showing platform…they were the skills I felt we really left with. And nobody taught them to us. We just did it

> ourselves out of necessity. We did it because there wasn't anything that was being offered.
>
> (P2:415-425)

This appears to show art school's pedagogical aims around instilling independence were met. However, the acknowledgement that this is deliberately created by the art school, as proposed (see Orr & Shreeve, 2018:112-115), is missing. Instead it encapsulates frustrations of unmet expectations and disparagement of the art school, and overarchingly, the promotion of collective perseverance to self-ledness.

Elsewhere assertions of self-ledness were combined with acts of negation. One artist derided professional development afterwards claiming to already possess professional skills, stating, 'I've always been quite autonomous…done my work mostly for myself, and been organising art shows for myself and for others' (P7:797-804). Another disparaged the art school's lack of theoretical curricula activity, stating 'you have to go and do it yourself, I've learnt most of my contextual studies and art history since leaving' (P8:2846-2858). These assertions of self-ledness nullify the art school's teaching and simultaneously suggest they taught themselves. Significantly the teaching and/or learning that self-ledness addresses centre on independence and autonomy, both notably highly mythologised artistic traits across accounts of artistic myth (Kris & Kurz, 1979 [1934]; Soussloff, 1997; Wesner, 2018) that broadens understanding of the negation of the art school. This can be extrapolated further by considering the relation to identity and the question of who is defining artists, a question I first found to be significant to the artists' experiences through the cats-cradling method I devised, and a specific connection I made between validation and negation, which I develop further here.

5.4.3 Pedagogised & Professionalising Identities: Who Defines Artists?

Diverse learner, artist, and professionalising identities, intersect during art school, often clashing, occluding, and overlapping. The acts of negation and assertions of self-ledness do not merely reflect resistance to scholarship or a supposed 'different kind of learning style' (Tynan & New, 2009:296) that implies artists' specialness and art schools as providers of distinct education. Rather, they are forms of resistance (destructions) and reclamations (separations) in reaction to pedagogised identities, that

were conveyed as impossible selves; a resolve of the possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) they were initially motivated by, which are subsequently partly denied and rejected.

I do not suggest artists aspire to strictly autonomous selves. Those, I agree, are unachievable subjectivities due to socially constructed existences (Zizek, cited in Atkinson, 2002:114). Rather, I suggest, the imagined selves the artists strove for through art schooling are not satiated through attending, and, having altered since, as graduates the artists negate their education in quests to re-regulate their identities. Indeed, educational settings are understood to conjure imaginary identities 'whereby we anticipate life after study' (Atkinson, 2002:115), and 'desires to develop and become particular kinds of individuals are engineered and regulated' (ibid.:116). In chapter four, I highlighted the possible selves artists envisioned through art schooling, however, these were not anticipated as selves that were the 'constructed projects' (ibid.:115) of the art school. Though they may have incorporated projected value from reputations and affiliated networks, since the artists graduated, identifications with pedagogised identities have waned and denials replace ideals. Perhaps because these ideals are conceived 'without ever really knowing what it would entail to be that other self' (Buchanan, 2000, cited in Atkinson, 2002:115). The gap between recollections of idealised selves and 'in the moment' (Oyserman et al. 2017:144) selves, is plugged by recollections in which 'the "me" is constructed, not stable' to 'fit the constraints and affordances of their current situation' (ibid.:140) (that of the interview) embedding negation and self-ledness.

This self-regulation, seen as a professional value (Evetts, 2012:5), can only take effect as graduates, and may be furthered through studies like this. Professional identity theory suggests, 'individuals, through storytelling, can reconstruct themselves and figure themselves out' (Paquette, 2012:13), situating 'narrative identities' which 'give us an idea of an individual's ethical identity, or ethos' (Ricoeur, 1990, cited in Paquette, 2012). Acts of negation and assertions of self-ledness refer to the denying, undoing, and unlearning of indigestible absorptions and pedagogised identifications felt to have been imposed on them through art schooling. Together they underlie what I term *post-pedagogised* identities; the de/reconstructed narrations of the pedagogised

identities entrenched at art school. Using 'post' as a prefix, is intended to mean both 'coming after and adding to' as well as entailing some 'rejecting' (see Burr, 1995) of pedagogised identities. Post-pedagogisation thus represents an 'active process involving the desire to assume a particular self, stemming from a perceived lack' (Atkinson, 2002:115); the 'lack' being in the unattainability of possible selves during their education, only realised afterwards.

Negation and self-ledness were also fuelled by the marginalisation of individuals (and identities) through assessment processes in which 'certain work is deemed worthy and therefore valued…whilst other work is not' (Atkinson, 2002:119), meaning 'certain subjectivities [sic] experiences are valued over others' (ibid.). Art school in general, and C/crit culture in particular, encourage the revealing of private thoughts and ideas in public (Moran, 2009:35), heightening exclusions where the assessed artworks are entangled with identities; a form of marginalisation which can be understood as a particular kind of 'dehumanisation' (Freire, 2005[1970]) and oppression found in the art school. As Freire (2005[1970]:43-44) states,

> Humanisation…is the people's vocation [which is] constantly negated, yet it is affirmed by that very negation. It is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, [and] oppression…; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity.

Negation and self-ledness represent struggles for, and, to an extent, affirmations of certain freedoms; freedom from marginalising assessments, impossible selves, and professionalised and pedagogised identities. This is embodied in the post-pedagogised identities the artists asserted (and constructed) during the interviews (in-interview identity work being further discussed in chapter seven).

Though the artists sometimes valued what they took from art schooling, demonstrating relative acceptance of their co-constructed identities, the phenomenon of negation and self-ledness consistently overshadowed these discussions. Instead the influence of artistic myth is apparent. Self-ledness is centralised within commonly mythologised figures, including the lone genius, the independent/autonomous individual, and the starving artist (Bain, 2005; Soussloff, 1997). In particular, during art school, I find the

artists' beliefs and projections of possible (and impossible) selves to be enmeshed with ideologies and myths around 'special talent' (Wesner, 2018:28). These myths are interpreted by the artists through negation as attempts to confront those ideologies. For example, if marginalisation occurred through C/crits, if being lucky hasn't come to fruition, or if anticipated ideal selves come to be realised as impossible selves after all in the de/reconstruction of pedagogised identities towards post-pedagogised ones. The unravellings, adaptations, and recoveries of these identities are detailed in the next chapter, where reflections underlying the core category of professionalisation are foregrounded.

5.5
Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented my findings of the artists' reactions to their art schooling, revealing complexities and the interconnectedness of the core categories of identity, myth, freedom, and professionalisation, and highlighting further tensions and contradictions within these. Conflicts surface around desires to project, protect, and dismantle certain artist, learner, pedagogised, and professional identities from their now post-pedagogised positions. Throughout the interviews, the artists took opportunities to resituate the stories that shape them, revising interconnections with artistic myths, challenging the institution and definitions of their identification, and situating their agency, which I foregrounded in this chapter. I show the artists took control of their identity formation through self-regulatory actions towards post-pedagogised states. They retained valued aspects of their pedagogised identities and shed others to construct themselves afresh in their ongoing processes of professionalisation. This study supports the artists in telling and situating their professional identities, establishing accounts that are now woven into the fabric of this new telling of artists' experiences and perspectives of art schooling.

In section 5.2, the artists' perceptions of skilling were discussed through the lens of Art School Absorptions (ASA), that highlighted both passive and active absorption. ASA are understood as encountering both acceptances and rejections of a range of skills in different categories. In particular professional development was cautiously navigated, and often rejected, due in part to its consistent connection with markets and business practices, but also as part of assertions of negation and self-ledness towards enacting

certain freedoms that intersperse this chapter. In section 5.3, experiences of the C/crit were discussed, garnering polarised perspectives with accounts of C/crit brutality and marginalisation, alongside being highly valued, also highlighting navigations of professional identity construction and myths of specialness. Under the term *Osmotically Learning*, student-led ways of learning were considered as assertions of agency in conspiring incidental self-governed learning around structured curricula activity; discovered rather than seen as explicitly delivered under art school's control. As well, structurelessness was shown to afford only certain people certain freedoms, and enabled some self-discipline. Finally, in section 5.4, the culmination of instances of rejection, resistance, and rebuttal, as forms of destruction, and of proclamations of self-led practices, as separations, combine to reveal the influence of identification, self-regulation, and myth on the development of the artists' professional identities during art school, notably told from distinctly post-pedagogised perspectives.

Underlying the discussions in this chapter are specific de/reconstructions voiced during the interviews, in which validations, definitions, and identifications the art school has influenced are purposefully minimised. As seen in the previous chapter, in *Being Lucky* and *Always & Only an Artist*, the conversations I had with the artists centred on their identities and negating the effects art school was felt to have had on these. Some elements of art schooling are seemingly protected, such as the brutality of art school C/crits being ring-fenced as only possible within the institution, perhaps also driven by the underlying emotional embeddedness of these events that is remembered (see Kensinger & Kark, 2018). Reputation was also still valued, as in the previous chapter, and these preservations help maintain discourses around the specialness of the art school, and of the affiliated mythic artist figure.

Negation serves the purpose of the artists' reclaiming their identities under certain auspices, discussed further in the next chapter as occurring through particular recoveries and adaptations. My findings challenge the perception that art school pedagogies are delivering what they intend. There is a gap between the supposed experience and those of the artists I interviewed. These findings can be included in discussion on higher art educational policy, and if acted upon may improve experiences, providing deeper understanding of the charges put to art schooling in order to develop

more inclusive, less hierarchical, and better circumstances of learning for artist-students, without compromising on the elements it does well. It is important to also recall the artist who said, ‘in terms of life experience, you know, I wouldn’t change it for the world’ (P1:2432-2436).

Chapter 6
6. RECOVERY|CONTINUUM
Reclaiming, Regaining, & Returning

6.1
Introduction

In this final of the three findings chapter, I outline the artists' experiences and perspectives of post art school, of forging their professional careers, situating their professional identities (or not), and of continuing with and adjusting their practice according to their different situations. The title encapsulates an interdependent action I found occurring for the artists post art school; that of *Recovery* and *Continuum*. *Recovery*, portends the double meaning of both getting better and taking back, discussed here as intentional activities carried out by the artists as graduates. *Continuum*, signifies gradual progression for the artists, relating to their capacities to progress that encompasses their motivations, values, and beliefs, as well as events and opportunities, underscoring continued commitment to being and working as artists. Together recovery|continuum co-exist, acting as the means and the process for shaping the artists' futures. Though there are commonalities, recovery|continuum differs for individual artists, depending on personal identifications predicated on selves based in pasts, presents, and futures. The theme of professionalisation underlies the foregrounding of ways in which the artists anticipated and created their recovery|continuum post art school, what influenced these perceptions and actions, and the challenges they encountered.

In section 6.2, I address the artists' emotionally embedded reflections on their disappointments, pain, and trauma they associated with their art schooling. I discuss their struggles with transitioning from artist-student to artist-graduate and the strains placed on their professional identities and practice. I consider the influence of memory, and in particular the roles of hindsight and nostalgia in situating responsibility, whether levelled at the art school, themselves, or the art world, and the effects this has on easing difficult emotional legacies and magnitudes of discontent afterwards. In section 6.3, I consider the complexities of navigating realities posed by their new situations. First, I discuss the effects of structurally embedded ideological divisions between 'inside' the

art school 'bubble', and 'outside' in the 'real world', and the challenges this presents. After, I examine the artists' autonoetic consciousness and understanding of artistic myths that are entangled with their new realities. I reveal occurrences of de/re-mythification, introduced in chapter two, as recoveries of their stories and processes of self-regulation related to the core category of freedom that appear as essential to their recovery|continuums. Lastly, I outline how artists juggle jobs, practice, and threats to identities in becoming artist-teachers that cause conflicted feelings, highlighting identity struggles in professionalisation. In section 6.4, I discuss the artists' achievements of their anticipated and actual progress, highlighting a relationship with these and initial motivations for attending art school, also considering their hopes and wishes that continue to motivate them, in particular emphasising the recurrence of the *Always* and *Only* identities as driving forces in these artists' lives. The self-regulatory behaviours they have enacted thus far are discussed as based in deep understandings of themselves and the myths that gravitate around them, which I discuss as a particular kind of autonomy in seeking authorship of their own stories.

I situate these findings within the wider discourse of artistic work and creative labour (Banks 2010, 2017; Banks et al., 2013; Oakley et al., 2017; Taylor & Littleton, 2012; McRobbie, 2002, 2016), and consider certain challenges related to precarity (Gill & Pratt, 2008; Minton, 2009). In assessing the ways in which the artists approached and navigated graduate challenges, I refer to socio-psychological studies on memory (Tykocinski & Steinberg, 2005; Conway & Loveday, 2015; Klein, 2013), and specifically on the roles of hindsight (Bernstein et al., 2016) and nostalgia (Boym, 2001; Sedikides et al., 2008, 2018), and the effects of these on the artists' recollections. Cultural and pedagogical theory (Dean, 2015; Orr & Shreeve, 2018) is drawn on to unpack experiences of artificial divisions between art school and their recovery|continuum. I later engage specific discourse on artists' identities to discuss artist-teacher conflicts (Daichendt, 2010; Atkinson, 2011), artistic myth (Røyseng et al., 2007; Wesner, 2018), and when outlining the artists' moves away from conventional characterisations (Bourdieu, 1986, 1993; Becker, 1982; Taylor & Littleton, 2012). I discuss my findings on the artists' self-regulatory behaviour through a combination of psychological studies (Bandura, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2006), and cultural theory (Banks, 2010; Abbing, 2004).

6.2

Realisations & Romantic Notions

EMOTION | MEMORY | HINDSIGHT | NOSTALGIA

So far, the artists' emotional responses to art schooling have been somewhat underlying. In this section I centralise their disappointments and encounters they describe as traumatic and painful, foregrounding embedded memories of distressing experiences that have remained with them affecting their identities, practices, and careers. In seeming contradiction, I also discuss their sentimental fondness and nostalgic regard for their education. I consider the prevalence and complexities of hindsight and nostalgia; both pervasive features of the artists' memories, displaying autonoetic consciousness and diachronicity (Klein, 2013), presented here as coping mechanisms in the artists' recovery|continuum processes as ongoing navigations of professionalisation since their art schooling.

6.2.1 Unrealised Dreamands: Disappointment & The Hindsight Bias

Art school leavers are understood to find continuing with practice challenging (McRobbie, 2016; Frenette & Dowd, 2018). Like other professions many will not continue (Becker, 1982), or perhaps not in anticipated ways. In particular, many artists face precarious labour and living conditions (McRobbie, 2002; Gill & Pratt, 2008). Some suggest these difficulties stem from a lack of entrepreneurial training in art schools (Thom, 2017; Frenette & Dowd, 2018). While these are important discourses, I highlight the less often discussed levels of disappointment, pain, and trauma artist-graduates experience and deal with that deeply affect their capacities to continue with art practices afterwards. My findings show these revolve around unmet expectations, regrets, and feeling let down, encapsulated in the term *Unrealised Dreamands*, which blends notions of unfulfilled demands and unaccomplished dreams that were anticipated could be met through art schooling. These findings highlight art schooling, and the aftermath, as an emotionally difficult period for artists. Expressing emotional unrest however, is considered detrimental towards being/becoming a 'creative worker' (McRobbie, 2016:40), compromising perceptions of professional identities by challenging expectations of artists' temperaments as being 'continuously positive' (Gill, 2014, cited in Taylor & Luckman, 2020:272) and 'cheerful if not exuberant' in maintaining 'a professional stance' (McRobbie, 2016:40). There is no

space for periods of 'disenchantment or uncertainty' (ibid.) for artists who are also anticipated to be unremittingly productive due to 'an overemphasis on individual talent and relentless self-belief' that does not permit 'uncreativity' (Bilton, 2015:153) as part of practice. In contrast, the artists I interviewed frequently described their discontent and anger, as well as lapses in practice.

Discontentment and frustration were expressed over slow or intermittent practice, and the art school was often held responsible. One artist's unplanned 'seven-year gap' was linked to painful experiences after which they recalled stating, '"I would rather swallow my own tongue than go back into education"' to avoid being 'that vulnerable again' (P10:2382-2393). Another explained, 'with hindsight…so much of my energy was just spent trying to…deflect what was being thrown at me…I never really had the chance to…develop and grow as an artist' (P6:802-819). They said this meant they 'spent a lot of time…trying to recover from actually, a quite traumatic experience' (P6:1700-1703), which took 'three or four years' of 'actively dealing with it', adding, 'it doesn't go away. It's part of my history' (P6:2152-2168). Another suspended making for five years afterwards, likening this to lapsed religion, only restoring their destabilised faith after realising their art schools' accountability in their not reaching the ideals they had felt led to aspire to (P8:931-966). Criticism also centred on feeling let down by a lack of guidance, implying they had expected more. One said they, 'didn't know you were supposed to chase people if you needed them' (P10:1333-1350). Another recalled not knowing 'what to do…or how to get there' (P1:2058-2060) afterwards, having been told 'painting was dead' (P1:2918-2948). While others claimed 'much more could have been done to help people carry on…it's like dropping off a cliff' (P4:3584-3616).

Unsettled emotions stick in our memories (Kensinger & Kark, 2018), and are likely to have surfaced in my conversations with the artists seeing as art schooling appears to have been an emotionally fraught time. Here, I consider the influence of the 'hindsight bias' (Bernstein et al. 2016), which is understood to be engaged to manage disappointing scenarios like these, by making 'uncertain events seem predictable and inevitable' (Bernstein et al., 2016:1). Specifically, the presence of 'retroactive pessimism' (ibid.:6) is noticeable in some of the artists statements, which helps to

'make sense of self-relevant outcomes and attribute incongruities in expectations to…external reasons', witnessed where art school is deemed responsible for not meeting expectations. This is employed to diminish disappointment by viewing situations as out of one's control, deferring accountability, which is key to how retroactive pessimism acts as a defence mechanism, conspiring disappointment over regret (Tykocinski & Steinberg, 2005:554). For instance, 'it is easier to conclude that "I never had a chance to succeed" when the negative outcomes are uncontrollable' making retroactive pessimism 'a defense [sic] mechanism that is more applicable in low control situations' (ibid.). These behaviours are an 'emotionally based defensive mechanism' that is a means to 'dissonance reduction' (ibid.). The artists' use of hindsight, which positions the art school as responsible for their discontentment, acts to partially diffuse it.

Further disappointment surfaced around reverence for London, and YBAs, both motivational factors discussed in chapter four. However, after art school the artists necessarily shifted their outlooks. A 2000s graduate, who stated their (unmet) expectations of fame 'came directly from the YBAs' (P2:1674-1691), alleviated their disappointment by focussing on what was out of their control, explaining, 'there was a generation gap between us, enough that we couldn't hook onto it' (P2:1185-1186). Accordingly, 'perceived attainability' influences a greater 'magnitude of disappointment' (Tykocinski & Steinberg, 2005:552), apparent in proximal claims to almost achieving YBA successes. This discontent rose in accounts from the 1990s graduate who revered their 'pop-star'-like YBA teachers, recalling the 'ambition [that] defined them…became the expectation' (P9:807-817), and that 'if they didn't achieve [YBA successes] by the time they left…they'd failed' (P9:820-894). They confessed, 'it took me a while to unpick that…It is very difficult to leave that environment and…maintain that expectation in London' (P9:898-910). The artists' frequent, and somewhat romanticised, anticipations of attending a London art school and being 'picked up' (P7:324 and P9:826) by a gallery straight from degree shows also exemplifies the influence of YBAs on London's reputation for opportunity (see While, 2003). In this sense, attending a London art school may engender an inflated idea of potential achievement, due to the notoriety of particular schools and alumni careers.

Certainly, widespread disappointment among the artists in this study is perhaps encapsulated by one who defended their dissatisfaction, explaining,

> We all got through a very difficult process to get into art school. We all got into good art schools, we all came out pretty well…but no-one is very clued-up…[no-one is] involved with the art world, 'cause nobody can fathom it out.
>
> (P4:4774-4812)

The expectation embedded here translates as feeling deserving of success, or a different outcome, and that disappointment is greater in magnitude when the reputation of the art school is valued as higher. The difficulty in coming to terms with this embodies much of the distress, and requires a reconfiguration of the possible selves they were motivated by in the first instance.

Hindsight influences the de/reconstruction of possible selves that the artists make foreseeable in these realisations. It is understood that 'in hindsight, people try to reconstruct their foresight knowledge' (Bernstein et al., 2016:8) as part of 'motivated sense-making' (ibid.:6). The artists employ hindsight in revising possible selves to make sense of their situations, focussing either on 'external reasons (retroactive pessimism)' as already witnessed, or 'internal reasons', termed 'defensive processing' (ibid.). Examples of the latter are observed in the artists' blaming youth; it is no longer the art school's fault, but can be taken on as theirs, even if they knew no different. Youth was blamed for their 'miserable experience', attributed to 'thinking I knew it all…and realising I didn't' (P1:497-501), or for not knowing 'what I wanted out of it' (P10:840-842), and as contributing to their 'struggle' (P12:292-298). Youth was also used to reason grades being undisputed (P10:1244-1269) and MAs being regretfully foregone (P1:871-877). One artist substantiated their claim through 'selectively activating supporting evidence' (Bernstein et al., 2016:13), stating a tutor told them, 'you really are too young to be at art school…You need to have life experience to be an artist and you've got nothing' (P1:885-891). However, taking responsibility exposes regret, because 'with additional control one gains an added sense of responsibility over the outcomes, and, if the outcomes are negative, one is likely to experience regret for not having acted differently' (Tykocinski & Steinberg, 2005:554). Hindsight is often employed to diminish disturbing memories of art school whether through taking

responsibility and conspiring regrets, or bypassing responsibility and reducing disappointments. As well as through hindsight, memory functions in other ways to process emotional experiences including through nostalgia discussed next.

6.2.2 Different Then //\\ Different Now: Nostalgia & Romancing the Past

It is understood that 'memory', 'the self', and 'subjective temporality' influence 'the complex act of projecting oneself into the future' (Klein, 2013). Part of moving forwards takes place in looking back, triggering 'imagined alternatives' (Tykocinski & Steinberg, 2015:557), based on past, present, and future projections. Here, I discuss the artists' recollections of their degrees, highlighting perceived changes since graduating, and ways it seemed better when they studied. This kind of nostalgic regard is something I recognised in my own memories of art school during the interviews, and a theme I unravelled through the drawing as AMM process I developed (see figure 7, p.85). This led me to consider how nostalgia is used by the artists, in their coming to terms with 'that which will not have been' (Butler, 2004, cited in Markham, 2017:34), and which I discuss here as easing emotional distress in their recovery|continuums.

Assertions of better days were frequent across the graduate groups. Some claimed their education had a slower pace than today (P3:3129), and others considered they'd had larger studios than would be possible now (P12:1473-1489). Another observed, 'the world's changed…there was no internet access, but the library…was amazing' (P9:4713-4719). One artist considered they attended art school 'before everything changed' (P5:182), and another proposed, 'you can't do a lot of the things that you used to be able to do at art school' (P9:4697-4698), stating current student's experiences are 'not the experience I had. They're not going to get it' (P9:2324), others thought today's students more professionalised (P6:1165-1184) (as noted in chapter five). These comments present a bifurcated picture of times being *better then* and *worse now*. Even events which could be interpreted as *worse then*, such as tutors returning from a 'lunchtime piss-up…half cut' (P5:448-456), are portrayed as *better* because art school was perceived as more 'louche' and 'bohemian', less 'corporate' or 'geared towards…succeeding, or passing certain marks' (P5:204-215). Often assertions reflected cultural values, which are understood to affect what is recalled (Wesner, 2018:66). Lower student numbers in their day were regarded superior (P4:3589-3596), and higher numbers of today devalued the 'currency' gleaned from being chosen to be

'one of the twenty' (P9:2594-2595). One artist attributed 'far too many art students' (P10:5120-5124) to reduced opportunities post-art school, echoing fears of an 'overproduction of artists' (Wesner, 2018:28) (see also Morgan & Nelligan, 2018). Some considered rising tuition fees and their (in)capacity to afford to study now (P3:510; P10:1884; P9:1476), reflecting concerns over increased fees and accessibility (Banks, 2017; Hatton, 2019). Others labelled today's art education a 'business' (P5:82) and artist-students 'clients' (P5:5462), echoing discourse on student-consumers (Tomlinson, 2014; Bunce et al., 2017). Another claimed the 'borderline-illegal decisions…[and] strategies I employed are genuinely no longer legal' meaning 'access to certain opportunities…have been closed up' (P10:1842-1880)[63]. This artist had squatted empty buildings to live and work (and exist/survive) in. Their statement mirrors studies on increasingly diminished survival options available to artist-graduates, that include reduced live-work opportunities (Minton, 2009; Harding, 2011), which have, since 2012, also been affected by the criminalisation of squatting in the UK (London Councils, 2012; Dadusc & Dee, 2015; Moore, 2015). The changes amount to reduced freedoms through the implanting of 'new habits of thought and action into those at risk of being lured into a life of crime and vice' (Whelan & Ryan, 2018:34). They also influence the artists' experiences as feeling unique and timely, and illustrate some generational differences between graduate groups.

Nostalgia underlies these comments, and was recognised by some who remarked, 'I might have a slightly…rose-tinted-glass view of it' (P4:2702), and 'I'm making it sound, now, terribly, idealistic and lovely' (P4:2275), or 'that sounds hopelessly romantic, now, and almost irresponsible' (P9:1561), and 'it's difficult not to be romantic about it' (P9:2273), highlighting complexities in the artists' experiences, contrasting with negations discussed in chapter five. In considering the artists' use of nostalgia, I acknowledge its interconnection with memory, which, like the self-concept and notions of possible (and impossible) selves, is considered a temporally located construction, entangled with identity and explanations we offer of ourselves and others in given situations (Conway & Loveday, 2015; Klein, 2013). Recollecting necessitates 'scenario construction, forecasting, self-continuity (i.e., personal diachronicity)' and

[63] Artists exploiting semi/(il-)legal means to get by, such as squatting, is well-documented (Moore, 2015) and defended for plugging a gap in the shortage of affordable live-work spaces for artists (Dadusc & Dee, 2015) even if not necessarily a practical solution.

'planning' (Klein, 2013:70). Memories are considered 'not reconstructions', but 'transient constructions' (Conway & Loveday, 2015:580), that are fluid and entangled with imagination (ibid.). Our memory helps us 'make sense of the world and operate on it adaptively' (ibid.). For artists in particular, memory is considered an important bridge between the 'past, present and future in an artist's career' (Wesner, 2016:42), and 'an instrumental tool that can be moulded as needed' (ibid.:43) to support their professional direction. It is also notable that 'artists, like anyone else, choose to remember what they think will be helpful in narrating their story' (ibid.:63). Those I interviewed will have also selected and constructed certain memories during our conversations.

Nostalgia is interwoven with time, potentiating one's future by 'sparking an approach orientation, increasing optimism, and evoking inspiration' (Sedikides et al. 2018:2). Though also considered to pre-date modern concepts of time, and goal orientated thinking (Boym, 2001:8), accounts of nostalgia date back to maladies recorded in the 15th century, documenting 'the sad mood originating in the desire to return to one's native land' (Hofer, 1688, cited in Boym, 2001:1). Etymologically, nostalgia is linked to 'the Greek *nostos*, to return home, and *algia*, a painful condition - thus, a painful yearning to, return home' (Davis, 1979:1, original emphasis). Notably, *pain/sadness* and *return* feature in both descriptions. Using nostalgia may reflect the artists' longing to return to a time that held future promise, that, in the present has come to represent disappointment and missed opportunity. Indeed, it is understood that employing nostalgia 'most resembles pride and self-compassion, and least resembles embarrassment and shame' (van Tilburg et al., 2018:742). Through nostalgia they engaged more optimistically with what art school has come to mean to them, easing or suppressing disappointments and painful emotional attachments. Theirs, is perhaps 'not a nostalgia for the ideal past, but for the present perfect and its lost potential' (Boym, 2001:17). The mournful disclosure of one artist embodies this, where they say, 'I will never forget what the tutors said to me when I got accepted…and why they'd chosen me…you don't forget stuff like that…sometimes I just wish I'd carried on on that path for a bit longer' (P1:3561-3577), reflecting the sentiment that, 'nostalgia is a mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, the loss of an enchanted world' (Boym, 2001:6). A world, as discussed next, in which certain freedoms are experienced

(and held) in stark contrast to the world the artists entered after art schooling. These categories deliberately run into one another here, reflecting groupings of categories I made through the cats-cradling method used in Selective coding (see figure 19, p.95), through which I connected the artists' reflexivity in looking back from their new realities in their continuum.

6.3
Navigating Realities

> I thought, 'Yes, the world's my oyster'…and it's not, of course, but…
> (P4:899-903)

In this section, I discuss new realities the artists faced as graduates. I consider the effects of the often-bifurcated domains of 'inside' and 'outside' the art school and how art schooling was thus experienced as a bubble-like safe-haven against the backdrop of the 'real world'. After, I examine *De/re-mythification*, which occurred when the bubble burst, employed by the artists to dismantle myths considered impeding to their progress and enacted as displays of agency over these framings. Finally, I discuss the *Juggle-Struggle*, where artists dealt with securing incomes, compromised freedoms, and threatened identities through subemployment or becoming artist-teachers.

6.3.1 The Inside/Outside Dichotomy

The separating of 'inside' and 'outside' the art school is an ideology instilled by 'industry, wider society and the academy' (Dean, 2015:281). 'Outside' is considered 'real', while 'inside' is an insulated bubble; a safe, if transient, artifice. The artists' references to the inside/outside dichotomy reflected this. Commonly 'outside' was referred to as 'the real world', for which one artist considered they would need to 'develop a different body of skills for' (P11:1562-1563). Another discussed their art school's reasoning for structurelessness as being, ''you're an artist. When you go out into the real world, you're going to have to be an artist. So, we're going to train you to be an artist'' (P1:1813-1826), however, they added, the lack of structure actually meant they felt ill-prepared 'going into the 'real world'' (P1:2361-2362). This reflects another's comments that art school was 'a bit naïve' and 'a bit of a bubble' (P3:1866-1867), a 'vacuum' where they were encouraged not to 'worry about the

outside world' (P3:1841). Its bubble-like status also symbolised familiarity and safety, however. While I acknowledge art school is not experienced equitably, some felt it was a 'safe-haven' where they could express 'who they are' which was 'not always accepted everywhere else' (P8:3111-3118). Others returned for postgraduate study, describing it as a 'lifeline' having 'really struggled' afterwards, feeling they 'couldn't survive' but needed to 'stay in London', explaining their MA was 'just about hanging on, staying in London' (P9:2791-2831). Another, also describing their MA as a lifeline, claimed it was another 'chance to be immersed' (P2:808-819), perhaps permitting them the freedom to '*Only*' once again. Some were not convinced however, and derided taking up an MA as 'postponing the inevitable by two years' (P5:5057-5058), the 'inevitable' being facing new realities 'outside' of the cushioned bubble.

The commonplace separation of worlds is entangled with institutional powers and identity, challenged by some as 'misleading spatial metaphors', where 'we are none of us wholly 'inside' or 'outside' any of the institutions or identities which partly constitute who we are' (Collini, 2012, cited in Dean, 2015:211). Orr and Shreeve (2018:99-100) deem the underlying connotation of 'real life' means 'the social world of practice is set in opposition to the lived life of the students', leading to 'a commonly held view that education is somehow 'unreal'', which they add 'in some respects it is!', somewhat reinforcing the division, even if unintentionally so. The entrenching of a divide also occurs elsewhere, with artist-students undertaking professional studies being expected to alternate between 'two different headspaces: the [art school] studio space, and the contextualising – out in the real world – space' (Rodriguez[64], cited in Campbell, L. 2016). These instances highlight a systemic issue, that, as Dean (2015:281) suggests, 'academic staff are not balancing an oppositional discourse but are comfortable using language that keeps education 'in its place''. Its 'place', since the institutionalisation of art schools during the 1960s and 1990s, outlined in chapter two, seemingly being subordinate to the wider institutions of art and education, and being accepting of institutional authority (Stahl, 2001). As a result, art schools maintain the status quo, positioning themselves in contrast with the 'real world', and influencing some of the struggles encountered after graduation.

[64] Soraya Rodriguez is former head of the *BA Fine Art Diploma in Professional Studies* at Central Saint Martins School of Art (UAL), a one-year additional sandwich year offered to fine art BA students, taken as their third year of study.

Why the division is engendered, and in whose interest it is to create, maintain or dismantle it, becomes a question of institutional and pedagogical significance. Some studies acknowledge 'arts alumni are clearly distressed by the disconnect between these two [worlds]' (Frenette & Dowd, 2018:54), yet, attribute it to a lack of entrepreneurial skilling (ibid.). However, rather than perpetuating the entrepreneurialisation of artists and their work, or assuming they will survive better once business-skilled, because that's what the 'real world' demands, other approaches are possible, and in effect. For example, at Brighton School of Art, being realistic about studio access upon graduation is embedded into the pedagogy, where it is recognised that 'most students won't go from their BA course into a studio situation' (Cornford, 2016, cited in Campbell, L. 2016), so instead it 'removes the possibility of the studio' (Campbell, L. 2016). Likewise, monetising practice is shunned through deliberately avoiding 'peddling the myth that most art students go onto make a living through selling their own art' (Cornford, n.d., cited in Rowles, 2013).

These pedagogical operations challenge 'real world' systems that otherwise commodify and instrumentalise arts practice, which expect (and have largely achieved) art education's compliant delivery to that end. Rather than promoting unachievable ways of working, or embedding neoliberal ideals by bringing the art market into art schools to create parity, these pedagogies contravene those which inscribe false ideals and freedoms to artist-students. The myth of artists being able to '*Only*' is threatened through this, replaced by preparing artist-students to face realities of juggling life, work and different practices as artist-graduates (discussed further shortly). Alternative pedagogies like these deny some of the hierarchies of power, in which the persistent separating of the academy and industry positions education 'as an ersatz process, subservient to a world 'out there' that is genuine, 'real' and so rightfully dominant' (Dean, 2015:212). The artificiality of 'inside', operating as a bubble-like 'layer of power' (Whelan & Ryan, 2018:64), that is seemingly as constraining to freedoms and professionalisation as structurelessness appears, causing lasting emotional tension for the artists, might perhaps be diminished. However, the inside/outside dichotomy is not

something many artist-students attending traditional institutions[65] necessarily have agency over. Instead, responsibility could be taken by educators to challenge this division through pedagogical interventions. Though artists might lack agency over these divisions, instead, they attempt to take control elsewhere, as discussed next.

6.3.2 De/re-mythification: Breaking with Romance

It is understood that, 'many expressions have captured the artist's myth. The romantic artist, the genius and the starving artist all refer to judgements made by contemporaries and historians' (Wesner, 2018:19). However, artists in this study largely disregarded these interpretations as unhelpful to their continuum after art school, and also blur these tropes. Under the subcategory *De/re-mythification* this study's core categories of identity, myth, and freedom converge through my examining of the artists' incidental and deliberate attempts at dismantling myths they felt were impeding, also highlighting their concessions to others, indicating an interwovenness of key themes underlying their stories raised here and analysed further in chapter seven.

The artists distancing themselves from myths was common. For example, one disassociated from the 'subscription to the romance of the starving artist' (P2:854), relating it to 'quite limiting beliefs about what financial status was available' to them (P2:850-851). They described these tropes as 'something that I don't think's helpful', and which they were still 'working to overcome' (P2:852-853). Another implied subscribing to the 'romantic' lifestyle and surviving precariously, seen as a 'rite-of-passage' elsewhere (Sidoti, 2015), became a marker of their commitment. Though they reticently deemed it unfeasible, recalling,

> There was a period of, like, 'It's not come true'…and there was also a thing of…you couldn't hack it. That you had to hang in there…the sort of, romance of the artist in the garret. But I just couldn't. It was impossible…There was no backup plan. I had to work.
>
> (P9:2982-3004)

[65] By traditional institutions I refer to accredited universities/colleges/art departments, rather than alternative art schools, noted in chapter two, which offer artist-students the capacity to mutually develop their curricula and pedagogy.

Others rejected romance claiming they hadn't wanted to 'waste three years with the romantic idea of being an artist' (P11:138), comparing their seriousness to those who subscribe to romanticised images. Yet, later they contradicted this admitting to being 'more romantic' (P11:3423) than colleagues, highlighting a complex response to mythologised identities.

However, their recognition that their stories are interconnected with myth, defined their seeking and respecting greater transparency from those influencing it. One commented, 'it's misleading how [fine art] courses are packaged. They're not vocational…you're not going to necessarily work as an artist'[66], and after being told by tutors they would be 'lucky' to do so, they commended their school for outlining realities claiming, 'it was brutal with facts' which they found 'very useful…genuine pragmatic support' (P10:5128-5166). Though they commend this transparency, luck went unnoticed (or disregarded) as a mythically influenced aspect of their story. Others also claimed art school depicted realistic scenarios, recalling, 'there wasn't much romanticism about the art world', which they were 'grateful for' because, they had found, 'nothing romantic about the art world' (P6:1027-1032). These accounts echo trends for transparency in other studies that propose 'fine art education no longer propounds but challenges a crude Romantic view of autonomy' (Kenning, 2019:2). However, though the artists appear more informed, I am cautious to consider this the lessening of myths perpetuated by art schools. In chapter five, I highlighted the kind of artificial autonomy promoted through structurelessness, and in this chapter, artists' struggles in their recovery|continuums are based in illusions partially inspired by art schooled myths, both ideas furthered through analysis of the core categories of myth and freedom in chapter seven.

In confronting this, the artists sought to open dialogue around myths to redress their impeding effects. One artist contributed to talks on graduate realities at their former school, to 'give them a realistic view of what we were doing. Not a, kind of, marketing-driven, 'Look at what we can do' [but] 'This is what my life is like'' (P8:1787-1806). Another queried negative perceptions of professional development,

[66] As footnoted earlier (footnote 47, p.122) understanding what 'working as an artist' might mean is varied, subjective, and not explicitly defined/definable. Alison Gerber's (2017) *The Work of Art* explains the multiplicities and variations in what constitutes artists' 'work' in-depth.

suggesting that without it, evaluations of artistic labour, that include 'there was no work involved' will remain, because, they suggested, 'the danger of not having any form of professional development' was that 'you just have this mystique of the artist' (P12:2070-2096). They conceded that 'people like' the 'mystique of the artist', which involves 'the artist just slaving away and creating this work' (P12:2531-2533), and that people have 'got it in their head what they think an artist is'. This describes a 'held' (and somewhat restricted) identity (Lindemann, 2014), like the mythic image of the artist-genius inscribed with preordained talent (Kris & Kurz, 1979[1934]). To change these perceptions, they proposed artists need to 'talk about their process' to be transparent about 'how much work has gone in' (P12:2640-2679), to reveal artists' realities of working, and for artists to be treated like other workers, rather than special or different. As Vishmidt (2011:16) suggests, 'learning to ask for artistic labour to be reimbursed through either wages or rent seems equitable', and identifying as a 'worker' as opposed to an 'artist' in order to 'cut the tie with the artist as speculator in her own work' is advocated by W.A.G.E (Working Artists and the Greater Economy, cited in Vishmidt, 2011). To achieve this, the artist suggested teaching how to price artworks through professional development curricula. However, they added, this would only work for those with object-based practices, *unlike* theirs (P12:2543), reflecting the problem that art is considered value-less, or 'useless', when 'the art market is the only existing metric whereby art can be valued' (Vishmidt, 2011:15-16).

This highlights artists' complex relationships with money are moving away from orthodox discourses that position artists as resistant to commerce (Bourdieu, 1986, 1993), instead demonstrating money *is* important to artists. Indeed, 'resistance to the commodity cannot be enacted in working for free when things cost money' (Vishmidt, 2011:16). A different artist also moved away from established Bourdieusian (1986, 1993) concepts of reversed economies, stating,

> I'm thinking about ways to monetise my practice and…how to create…financial sustainability that allows me to mainly make work, or only make work, if possible, but doesn't compromise me too much.
>
> (P6:2871-2879)

This artist demonstrates being ‘‘realistic’, ‘sensible’, and ‘responsible’’ (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:75) is important, and, while perhaps out of necessity rather than more deliberate de/re-mythification, this disrupts established characterisations of artists, such as Becker’s portrayals of ‘breaking of social rules and living outside social norms and conventions’ (ibid.), and asserts a professional approach and identity that includes performing practical responsibilities, a theme continued in chapter seven. However, again, this artist doesn’t recognise other underlying mythic connotations. Their desire to ‘only make’ is akin to the ‘special position’ (Kris & Kurz, 1979[1934]:91) afforded to artists in myth and related to art schools’ embedding of these ideas through structurelessness. As well, this artist later rejects romanticised views of artists, while foregoing noticing their subscribing to common notions of precarity that have come to define artists, ceded as a ‘political *persona*’ (McRobbie, 2016:84, original emphasis) and considered emblematic of creative workers (Gill & Pratt, 2008). While perhaps seeking to ‘reinforce an occupational identity’ (Bain, 2005:42), they insist, ‘I’m not romantic about it…I don’t want to have to suffer financially, because I think I’ve always been precarious. I’ve always known precarity, and it’s actually quite exhausting’ (P6:2843-2847), adding ‘there’s nothing romantic [about witnessing] elderly artists, who are basically impoverished…it’s really heart breaking. And that can’t actually happen to me’ (P6:2843-2867).

Like other studies where artists ‘balanced and/or overcame…myths in order to discover or understand who they were as artists’ (Piazza, 2017:139), in this study they both incidentally and deliberately attempt to challenge certain myths. Deliberate de/re-mythification exemplifies ways in which artists may now, as hoped, be becoming more ‘consciously and self-reflexively involved in more evidently projective ‘political’ activity’ so they might ‘develop a more autonomous and authentic relation to their work’, through questioning ‘credibility and credence of established social structures and arrangements’ (Banks, 2010:11-14). However, I consider overcoming myth entirely is an impossibility, because myths, like the anecdotes they stem from (Soussloff, 1997), morph according to transitory power dynamics (Soussloff, 1997, Røyseng et al., 2007). They are so deeply entrenched in the lives and works of artists, they go unrecognised as underlying their own stories. As well, new myths stick to them; they are myth magnets. For example current (Western) neoliberal contexts, such

as 'government precarisation' (Lorey, 2015) and the constant preoccupation with production (Stilinović, 1993) are captured in the artists' stories and their longings for 'only making'. Nevertheless, de/re-mythification forms a crucial part of the artists' recovery|continuum processes related to self-regulation and pursuits of self-authorship in the 'real world', observed in the rejections of, and concessions to, different myths. A theme developed in the next chapter as one of three of the artists' practices of freedom (along with performing congruence and negation of the art school) identified in this study. Here, I continue to consider navigations of new realities, of juggling employment with practice, the contractions of particular freedoms and further disassociations with myth that this entails.

6.3.3 The Juggle-Struggle

The influence of the artists' employment on shifting identities and freedoms are key to discussion under the subcategory *The Juggle-Struggle*, where the artists' experiences of paid jobs, including teaching, are discussed alongside how (im)possible (professional) selves are negotiated. First, I examine 'subemployment', a term I use to capture the subordination of a range of jobs to artistic work in avoidance of entrapment. After, I discuss becoming an artist-teacher, as an accepted yet conflicted component of the artists' professional careers.

6.3.3.1 Subemployment

An uncomfortable interdependence existed for the artists, between necessarily undertaking several paid, usually part-time, jobs to cover essential outgoings, and the infringements on their time, energy, and ultimately freedom to '*Only*' make art. Abbing (2004:8) considers that 'multiple job-holding is a clear expression of the continuation of the willingness of artists to work for low incomes', and 'the continuation of the romantic attitude in the arts on which this phenomenon is founded'. Myths certainly influence thinking that artists might anticipate to '*Only*' make, be free from common pressures like employment, or will lead a precarious life. However, as discussed previously, romantic attitudes are rejected, and monetising practice is part of the artists' realistic thinking. Both inform navigations through subemployment, and the de/reconstructions of mythologised identities discussed further in chapter seven. The need for money, and quickly, was certainly felt by the artists upon leaving art school, and there were also other considerations to working. One artist took advice to, 'get a

job in the art world. Get any job. Even if it's in the cloakroom…and do it to the best of your ability. Someone will notice' (P1:2127-2129). They recalled 'pretty much ordering toilet roll' (P1:2141) in a major London art gallery, and appreciated the 'shared understanding' between colleagues who had all 'gone to art school' (P1:2174). Being among likeminded people, a motivation discussed in chapter four, remains important, and echoes advice recalled in other studies that artist-graduates 'need to find kindred spirits' (Pye, cited in Davis & Tilley, 2016:167).

Conversely, others consciously separated their art practice from subemployment, whether as a butcher, waiting tables, or working in call centres, factories, and second-hand clothes shops, subordinating these jobs to the category of paying 'the bills' (P8:3963). Separating these positions meant they benefitted from connecting with different world views to the 'academic bubble' (P12:3968) and 'valued being out of the bubble of the art world' (P8:2572-2576)[67]. These jobs permitted 'a lot of time to think' (P8:2625) or somewhere to switch their 'brain off' (P8:2503). Subemployment that offers headspace for creative thinking, or otherwise, whilst also earning, was highly valued. Another artist also noted their job permitted 'quite a lot of time to think' and appreciated not being 'chained to that much', emphasising 'it is important to…retain a certain amount of freedom' (P3:4837-4860). Securing independence and flexibility are prerequisites of subemployment. Even when the dispensability of flexible workers is understood to increase precarity (Ross, 2008:6) it was sought to facilitate undertaking opportunities valued as more important. The balancing of compromised freedoms encapsulates the *Juggle-Struggle*, as one artist explained 'I wanted to do residencies…but that's also hard to combine with working, my job won't just let me go away for a month…I need to have a steady, full-time job, to just pay for my everyday life' (P7:2230-2249). In other studies, this juggling is termed the 'double life', exemplified by artists' 'continual balancing and accommodation of competing demands' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:69). I found the double life was also entangled with identity. One artist noted others who worked 'hard in other jobs…say they're an artist', and felt, 'it probably does help them to define themselves like that', whereas, for them they said 'it's like I'm hiding everything else I do' (P3:3796-3803). They took

[67] I note these views are perhaps influenced by this study's political backdrop and heightened awareness of circumventing 'echo chambers' (Deb et al., 2017) resulting from media silos involved in the UK's EU referendum and US presidential elections of 2016 (Markham, 2017).

pride in *having* to undertake other work, and in not being able to work full time on their art as a marker of not appearing privileged enough to do so, often defining themselves by their paid income (P3:3810-3815). Their highlighting of the necessity to work multiple jobs also eschewing myths around '*Only*' making.

However, rather than preserving their precariousness, as Abbing (2004) alludes to, I found the artists also had complex relationships with stability, and avoiding *stability traps* was prioritised. One artist explained they were 'worried' they would 'enjoy [work] a bit too much', adding, 'it could become too safe, too quickly…I can't get trapped' (P11:2996-3002). Others also feared entrapment explaining 'I did want stability, but I can see how that's a trap because you never do anything, and you never leave' (P3:4732-4731), stating they were 'aiming…for…a certain amount of freedom' (P3:4074-4075). Minimising the constriction of freedoms perceived to come with stability is specifically sought from subemployment. However, stability was not only avoided, but was also felt to be out of reach and so not worth pursuing. Those who considered they could secure 'job stability', felt their wage would never be sufficient to find ultimate stability in affording 'a property in London' (P3:4759-4764). Another admitted to quitting jobs because, 'at the time, [it] was better…and more stable for me to be on benefits…that's how badly I was paid' (P10:2559-2570). While exemplifying a 'willingness to discard [side jobs] at any time' (Wesner, 2018:33), it also demonstrates attempts to ensure some stability, to overcome the instability of low paid subemployment. Others initially sought stability through subemployment in the form of a recovery period, explaining, 'it's a question of stability…when I left art school, I went to work in a call centre…I needed to earn money, and also figure out what to do, and to also recover from the…experience' (P6:1617-1631).

It is notable, as per other studies, that artists' difficulties with subemployment partially lie in desires for 'freedom from external pressures and controls' (Amabile, 1983, cited in Taylor & Littleton, 2012:14). Though this was present, it was generally accepted that they would need to work other jobs, perhaps evincing the kind of anticipated 'new normal' of creative work signalled in other studies (Taylor & Luckman, 2018; Patel, 2020). The search for 'meaningful work' (Oakley, n.d., cited in Banks, 2010:12) that has been identified elsewhere, also appeared less on the artists' agendas, and a

preoccupation with navigating (in)stability featured more prominently. Subemployment is exploited and distrusted, undertaken as transient and side-lined. Additionally, it produces a kind of professionalisation that is entangled with resituating myths, and retaining certain freedoms, through which artists navigate their identities, negotiating ways of calling themselves artists while perhaps not working as one, or breaking from mythologised ideas in positioning themselves as less privileged when working several jobs. This is reminiscent of studies that find artists in an 'ongoing 'struggle for coherence'' (Taylor & Littleton, 2008, cited in Banks, 2010:14), as they try to 'mediate, manage or reconcile the varied opportunities and constraints of the art-commerce relation' (Banks, 2010:11). My findings foregrounded in chapter four, that highlight the artists' desires to act congruently with their beliefs in being *Always* and *Only* an artist, surface here and are interconnected with their navigations of possible (professional) selves raised by subemployment that is significant to their recovery|continuums. These navigations surfaced again when discussion centred on becoming/being an artist-teacher.

6.3.3.2 Back to School: The Artist-Teacher Conflict

Returning to art school to teach, or planning to, is an experience shared by many artists (Mollin & Reardon, 2009), including those I interviewed. I use the term artist-teacher, an acknowledged term in itself (Daichendt, 2010, Atkinson, 2011), to denote this specific professional identity, and the frequent ranking I found of 'artist' over 'teacher'. Rather than merging these identities, 'artist-teacher' also emphasises commitment to both (Daichendt, 2010:63), and can simultaneously 'highlight the tensions between the professional territories and cultures inhabited by artists and teachers' (Atkinson, 2011:118). It is understood that 'identity associated with both of these positions can be confusing and frustrating for those interested in maintaining both roles' (Daichendt, 2010:11). I found teaching also presented conflicted and threatened identities for artists.

Becoming an artist-teacher was met with some disdain, especially of the perceived 'cliché', even though recognised as 'partly [a] practicality', one explained, 'if you're an artist...how do you support yourself? Well, you go and teach in art school, 'cause you're qualified to do that' (P8:2659-2674), sounding resentful of the expectation of a formulaic route. Others also appeared resigned that teaching was 'seen as *the* career

trajectory of an artist' having fatalistically 'ended up going into' it (P2:1211-1223). There was also derision over the necessity of qualifications. One stated, 'I'm aware of the negative sentiment of teacher training…the idea that you have to have the PGCE to teach on Foundation, or you have to have a PhD to teach at university…is resented. Largely, rightly so' (P8:2659-2663). Another admitted, 'I got a PGCE in the end, under duress, when the rules changed. But…I was already running courses then' (P9:2939-2949). Though in line with other subjects, needing qualifications appeared threatening to the artists. It perhaps diminishes the orthodoxy of art's established, yet largely unchallenged (Bishop & Al-Rifaie, 2016), autopoietic systems (Luhmann, 1995), highlighting resistance to the erosion of self-sustenance felt by the 'unprecedented increase in regulation and surveillance of the teaching profession' (Atkinson, 2011:119). Additionally, there was criticism over *who* teaches, and artists struggled to identify with artist-teachers they'd had, or the processes involved in becoming one. Some witnessed 'teacher's pets' being 'picked up immediately to teach' and 'held into the bosom of the establishment' (P5:3588-4277) alluding to preferential treatment. Another cited a project they undertook investigating Black students' attainment in London art schools which showed 'a lot of the same biases [they] experienced [racism, sexism, classism] were still being experienced' (P6:3406-3418), proposing, 'there's lots of work to be done, about curriculum and also…personnel - *who* teaches', adding 'I don't…have an interest in teaching' (P6:3423-3430). These accounts highlight engrained prejudices found in art school selection processes (Banks, 2017), that often precede teacher training in art education (Daichendt, 2010) and contribute to the lack of diversity found in visual arts education overall (Hatton, 2019).

The artists' strained relationships with teaching persisted when describing experiences of being an artist-teacher, highlighting further friction between these identities, as they struggled to 'negotiate new or emerging subjectivities' (Atkinson, 2011:128). One artist, who took a graduate teacher position, exemplified this, stating,

> I love teaching, but it can only be very short-term…I feel like I have to edit so much of myself…. At art school, I could be myself, but I would just be isolated…where at my job, I can't be myself, because I can't be isolated.
>
> (P11:1000-1112)

Teaching threatened this artist's self-concept, so much, they considered restricting it. Threatened identities are understood to manifest from, 'a lack of control over changes which are...imposed upon the defining characteristics of one's identity' (Breakwell, 1986:7). The artist-teacher relationship can pose such a threat, where 'one goal does not support the goals or characteristics of the other' (Daichendt, 2010:11). Another artist acknowledged the effects of long-term teaching on their artistic ambitions, explaining, 'I'd hit a standard of work that I wanted to maintain. It was ironic that by teaching…actually, that stopped me making that work…I just got bogged down' (P9:3014-3021). Others noted that teaching different age groups was perceived as less valuable (P2:1214-1222), which in turn threatened their identities in terms of 'social acceptance' and 'unwanted negative notoriety' (Breakwell, 1986:4-6). They mooted, 'there's…high-brow teaching at university art school level, and there's poo-pooed teaching at undergrad…Curriculum education, was not cool, or wasn't high art enough' (P2:1214-1222) implying a preference for alignment with the artist-teacher of high-art distinction, perhaps matching their possible self.

Conversely, and reasoning some of the tension therein, was that teaching also presented opportunities. One artist admitted, 'I realised early on that I had huge gaps [in knowledge] when I was teaching' (P9:4625-4626), recognising that teaching had developed this area. Some considered teaching expanded their professional role to include being 'a maker, a project manager and also a policy effector' (P2:1236). Another saw their art practice and educating as intersecting, saying, 'I think of art education as a practice in and of itself. It's a creative act. And…one that I really, really get a kick out of' (P8:3853-3863). Others were aware that 'teaching…will now become an element of my practice, generally' (P11:3525-3526), and considered teaching validated their being an artist, deducing, 'you have to have an active practice to show that you're sufficiently successful to justify you lecturing. So…you've already sort of, succeeded' (P11:1441-1453). These accounts suggest the opening of 'a possibility for renewal' (Atkinson, 2011:122) and of 'producing new artistic-pedagogical configurations' (ibid.:118). Becoming an artist-teacher (or not) is nevertheless entangled with ongoing de/repositionings of identifications as artist-graduates. Taking on or rejecting the dual identity of artist-teacher is them 'confronting their scenes of recognition as both artists and teachers' (Atkinson, 2011:128). I continue to discuss

further de/repositionings of identifications and practice that define the artists' recovery|continuums in the final section of this chapter.

6.4
The Adaptation Period

ACCEPTING | RECOVERING | RESITUATING

The notion of adaptation encompasses biological, sociological, and philosophical fields, influencing behavioural, psychological, and structural change, but always intending survival at an agentic level (Corning, 2000). In this section, I discuss *The Adaptation Period* as a significant process of the artists' recovery|continuums, incorporating their recovering, resituating, and reregulating of their practices and identities post art school. This key category was developed from a connective post-it note made between 'Realities' and 'Age' during the cats-cradling arts/based-informed method I devised to connect, isolate, and select during Selective coding (see figure 19, p.95). Through this, the theme of professionalisation is also foregrounded, as is the entangled theme of identity as I examine the undoing of once anticipated possible selves and the ensuing navigations of emotional attachments and continued beliefs in themselves as artists, towards the construction of self-regulated post-pedagogised identities. I begin by outlining how the artists recovered their practices.

6.4.1 Recovering Practices

The artists' recoveries of their art practices included their adapting to slower paces and accepting pauses, modifying mediums and culling work, and letting go of certain (art schooled) conceptions. Periods of slow or unproductive output are replicated elsewhere (Patel, 2020), and were met with discomfort, contradicting pedagogised desires (and myths) around '*only* making' and raising difficulties presented by 'uncreativity' (Bilton, 2015) and shifting self-concepts. The artists' tolerance varied, with older graduates seeming more understanding, showing that an occasionally lapsing practice perhaps becomes more acceptable over time. Acceptance came in different guises. Some said losing 'that sense of guilt' around unproductivity meant they were 'more productive, now', accepting that 'I work as much as I work…and that's okay' (P8:1348-1357). Others recognised practice did not need to feel like a 'race…against myself or against other people' (P3:4665-4670), and another acknowledged their 'trajectory…had moments where it's…stalled because I had to then concentrate on

earning money' (P6:1643-1646). They advised, 'take your time…it's okay to spend a couple of years figuring something out…it feels like a long time, now, but it really isn't' (P6:3153-3164), dispelling expectations of 'instant success', and urging artist-graduates to understand 'that an art career is a long thing. It's a lifetime commitment' (P6:1458-1475), highlighting the need to tolerate pauses, as well as drawing on, and deepening, the enduring belief in always being an artist.

The artists' new circumstances of reduced space and time as graduates also instigated their modifying of mediums, underscoring a letting go of particular pedagogised identities. One admitted 'I'm trying to be- not a pure painter' (P1:3682) having taken up photography around a busy job as their 'creative outlet now' (P1:3664). Another described surrendering their 'sculptor identity' (P2:1256) to adapt to smaller studios due to 'pressures of London rents' and a roving 'lifestyle' (P2:1395-1398). They described creating a 'portable practice' that was both practical and represented 'a stripping back…to that primal base level of keeping going' (P2:1399-1401), because, they said, 'if all I need is a pencil…it might be easier to keep making work, in a shifting climate' (P2:1402-1405). Others had reduced making entirely (P3:3312), one stating 'I'm not really that type of artist that sits in a studio…I don't make work…the physical representation of the work isn't the main thing for me', adding, 'I haven't had a studio for quite some time…so, what I do is mainly just think about things…[if] I have some opportunity to exhibit work…I put things together' (P7:1919-1965). Smaller (or non-existent) studios also conspired the culling of artworks, which, though necessary, was regretfully undertaken, highlighting their feeling responsible for what was perhaps their only option (Tykocinski & Steinberg, 2005:554). The cull revealed emotional attachment to artworks. One called it a 'stupid thing to do in hindsight', lamenting, 'I wish I hadn't of done it…I destroyed some good stuff' (P5:3240-3267). Others viewed culling as an opportunity 'to start again' (P2:1364), albeit under distressing circumstances, downsizing their practice to work from home, which they admitted to 'mourning' this 'painful, and maybe a stupid decision' (P2:1357-1363). The entanglement of identity and artwork (Bain, 2005), perhaps reasons theirs and others' difficulties; the inevitable act of culling being a painful yet necessary facet of de/repositioning in recovery|continuum.

Further de/repositioning took place in the letting go of anticipated achievements and art schooled ideologies. One artist described how they 'let go of looking for commercial success and validation from my artwork', instead focussing on 'looking for a way to keep making', to 'trust' their work would 'find a platform' (P2:1137-1139). They realised they no longer wanted to fit into 'this white-male-dominated, theoretical-based white cube' (P2:1142-1143) they felt trained for, and found the courage to incorporate spiritual interests that were shunned as 'out of fashion' (P2:1051) at art school, reflecting the experiences of artist-graduates elsewhere (Liberty, 2018). Others recognised their 'different perspective on [being an artist] now' realising 'it was shedding off that idea that you would achieve something in the first two years of leaving' (P9:3023-3030), which came from an art schooled ethos of 'make work, show work, sell work' (P9:2779-2786). Another, after a five-year pause, said they realised they had been 'constantly aspiring to this ideal', which they 'will always fall short of' (P8:931-932). Acknowledging this, they actively sought to 'unlearn that critical voice' from art school, explaining 'if I'm not aspiring to something sublime. Then I'm free to make work' (P8:930-948). This kind of deliberate 'unlearning' is often considered a 'denial of school learning' (Menger, 2014:145). Though perhaps a negation, I found intentional unlearning was a necessary adaptation in their recovery|continuum conspiring certain freedoms around continued making.

The artists modified and adapted their practice, identities, and ideologies, to keep practices going in whatever guise, to self-regulate and instil as much autonomy and freedom as possible, and to retain the (self-defined) title of 'artist', satisfying their ongoing beliefs in *Always* being such. Their pushing against dominant art schooled ideologies of work, production, and notions of success that had become unobtainable expectations, shows underlying confidence in their work and selves, understood as necessary for creative workers 'in order to persist with [work] through a possibly protracted period of getting established' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:139), and, I would add, to get through inevitable gaps in ongoing practice. Their confidence also highlighting increased self-efficacy, that is 'a key agentic resource in personal development, successful adaptation and change' (Bandura, 2008:38). This behaviour is significantly self-regulatory, exemplifying not only explorations into 'possibilities for the cultivation of variegated (and potentially critical) forms of autonomy', but the kind of 'open and ambiguous sense of autonomous subjectivity' (Banks, 2010:14) that

has been anticipated. The artists found contentment in their adaptations of practice, that, while still boundaried by circumstance, are constructed as freer from art schooled ideologies, a concept furthered in chapter seven when discussing practices of freedom.

Furthermore, cultural influences on these adaptations are also notable. Artists operate within local and wider cultures, which have 'an important role to play in the process of adaptation' (Ensor & Berger, 2009:228), circulating 'shared beliefs, folklore' and 'collectively shared metaphors' (ibid.). For the artists, myths are entangled with their adaptations, in the acceptances of sufferance in destroying their art, in the positioning of being an artist first, above medium or even making, and in their recoveries, which facilitate certain myths being shed and others more deeply interwoven into their continuum. While re-regulating expectations and adapting practice is essential in the artists' recovery|continuums, maintaining motivation was also vital, as discussed next.

6.4.2 Maintaining Motivation

The determination to continue as an artist, in whatever way, was significant, exemplified by affirmations of, 'if I wanna do it, I've got to find a way to do it myself' (P2:1374-1376). Maintaining motivation was vital for the artists, who discussed various ways they found helped their recovery|continuum, also raising acknowledgments of art school's position in their careers. These had notable parallels with motivations behind attending art school outlined in chapter four, including drawing on art school reputations, finding likeminded communities, remaining in London, and accessing opportunities.

In contrast to discussion on negation in chapter five, in their recovery|continuum, the artists held aspects of the art school in higher esteem. One, as noted in chapter four, described the reputational value they continued to draw from attending a renowned art school as 'currency', claiming that it 'still opens doors' (P9:1404). They explained how the currency enhances their CV and aids job applications, conferring the kind of 'practical advantages' presented by 'having the name of a prestigious college on a CV' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:137), seen elsewhere. Also evident in these statements is Bourdieu's notion of heightened cultural capital derived through education (see Grenfell & Hardy, 2007:76). In particular, art school currency acted as an ongoing source of validation, not only to 'evidence' a 'worthwhile' career from the outset

(Taylor & Littleton, 2012). For example, one artist described attending alumni events organised by their art school as 'very supportive' and 'so encouraging' (P4:6289-6292). These events boosted their feeling able to call themselves an artist in confirming for them that working other jobs, or not having a studio 'does not mean that you're not an artist anymore' (P4:6299-6300). This also indicates a source of validation to aid, perhaps, fluctuating beliefs in *Always* being an artist, or at least maintaining conveyance of such to others. This artist utilised the currency as continued defence against feeling challenged to justify being an artist, stating, 'a condescending person…will say, 'Oh, yeah, so you're an artist? Yeah? Where did you go to art school?' Expecting nothing, and I say, 'I went to [Art School X] and its instant respect…it's always been there as a…benchmark' (P4:5401-5452). Where earlier, currency was seen to depend on scarcity (of student numbers), in recovery|continuum it was drawn on as a validatory source for continued identification and mutual respect.

The alumni event example, highlights the artists' ongoing desires for both validation and connection with other artists. One termed this a 'community of practice', describing groups of 'friends' who were integral to their continuing career progression, being 'supportive' and 'helping grow' their capacity for 'showing and working' (P9:4162-4178). Although they don't acknowledge its roots, it is a term introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991), defined by 'a common field of interest in which members value each other as fellow travellers and learn from each other' (Atkinson, 2011:130). Affiliates encounter 'the gradual process of fashioning relations of identity as a full practitioner' (Lave & Wenger, 1991:121, cited in Atkinson, 2011:130). For this artist, art school friendships are recognised for continuing to sustain them, particularly since they 'didn't stay in London' (P9:2265-2269), becoming 'professional relationships' based on a 'commonality of shared experiences' (P9:4187). Another artist described a similarly important group of friend-professionals who were 'dotted around the country', exchanging support in key areas of finance, funding applications, and balancing jobs, which they attested was 'the biggest support, and the biggest source of inspiration' (P2:1621-1622). Given the artists' magnitudes of discontentment post art school, discussed earlier, their seeking to meet their emotional needs is also apparent here. Indeed, it is understood that, 'emotions motivate us to stay close to trusted others: We feel safe and secure when we are symbolically in the presence of trusted others and

their representations' (Bonn, 2015:3). The artists seek others who may have similar experiences, and similar difficulties, which in turn motivates them to keep going.

Though professional networks existed outside of London, remaining there, or at least remaining affiliated with it, was typically sought by the artists, demonstrating London 'continue(s) to promote certain competencies, values, and lifestyles' (Bandura, 2008:38) as an underlying identity-based motivator. One artist, receiving news of cheaper rents, was spurred on saying they instantly thought, 'it's another year in London…this buys me more time…to do more work' (P3:3976-3994). They wanted to exploit their situation which fulfilled their needs around being in London, with maximum freedom to make, and financial stability, for as long as possible, foreseeing a time when they would have to either 'work a lot more to afford to live [t]here' which would inhibit their practice, or 'move somewhere else' (P3:3984-3985). The fear of moving out of London was notable by another's anxious remark that, 'if I'm pushed further out of this area, I am not a resident of London anymore…we're at breaking point' (P10:4701-4710). Indeed, the long-term sustainability of artists remaining living in London is increasingly uncertain (Yeo & Miller, 2017). While some questioned the resilience needed (P9:6193 & P4:6695), others highlighted alternatives, stating, 'I don't live or work in London, but my work is in London' (P9:4308), and added grudgingly that, 'ultimately, everyone has to bring their wares to London' (P9:5987) indicating conflicting feelings around this apparent need. Whether living or exhibiting there, London continues to motivate the artists through certain costs and benefits (Rubinstein, 2001), still generating value in economic, social, and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1986) signalled by one's resigned comment that 'the art world ain't leaving. The money's still in London, isn't it' (P5:5696-5697).

Finding stability that worked for them, in London or otherwise, was observed as 'completely intertwined' (P6:3005) with securing money and opportunities. The artists were motivated by the prospect of opportunities, however this also presented further challenges. One artist described their chance to buy a property and turn it into a live-work project space, conceived around 're-approaching…domestic space, and how to sustain yourself long-term as an artist' (P11:3213-3216). While a resourceful attempt at safeguarding their continuum, being 'on the property market' would provide 'a level

of stability', but they feared being 'tied to the property in a way that forces [them] to do a job that [they] don't want to do' (P11:3097-3101). While this represents a move away from considering the art market as the only sustainability option, exemplifying anticipated changes (Banks, 2010) discussed above, fears over erosions to freedom/entrapment are raised again, diminishing a viable option to sustain long-term commitment to practice, even if reliant on unequally available financial means.

Inequalities surrounding opportunity were indicated by another artist who feared each opportunity 'might be the last thing' (P3:4561), explaining not having 'the means' (P3:4590) to take opportunities, for which they felt they needed greater confidence, stability, and freedom to 'go off and not necessarily have to quit [their] job' (P3:4597-4599). They felt isolated in their inability to exploit opportunities, feeling surrounded by others who appeared able to (P3:4676-4678), summoning the recurring question of who gets to take opportunities (McRobbie, 2016; Banks, 2017). Others considered they could make theirs, though they acknowledged being faced with opportunities was 'a constant hustle' (P6:3011) in which decision-making was based in 'constantly…thinking about what you want to do, not just next year, but in five years, in ten years' learning 'when to say 'no' to things, when to say 'yes'' and crucially 'how to create your own opportunities' (P6:3012-3021). Maintaining motivation through opportunities is bound to inequalities, and also requires foresight and planning, which, as discussed next, is intertwined with maintaining a certain amount of freedom.

6.4.3 Towards a Kind of Freedom: Self-Regulation & Continuum

Artists' career development has been compared to a diagrammatic that has 'no form of lineage' with 'equally projected ups and downs as setbacks and sidesteps, as well as more circular forms of movement' (Wesner, 2018:158) indicating these trajectories resemble unpredictable, flexible, and undulating forms. Here I consider particular undulations that entailed the artists' recalibrating of self-beliefs and confidence, aligning with hopes and wishes, and re-regulating selves post art school, as the core categories of professionalisation, identity, and freedom converge.

Redressing confidence in their work, and bolstering self-belief in their *Always* identities, appeared as significant markers of the artists' recovery|continuums. It is understood that 'creative workers need to be confident' to 'make claims about the

quality of their work, because part of its personalised nature is that the worth of what is produced is, inevitably, linked to the worth of the producer' (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:127). As well, on an agentic level, 'among the mechanisms of personal agency, none is more central or pervasive than people's beliefs in their capability' (Bandura, 2001:10). Finding the ways to support, maintain or increase their confidence in their recovery|continuum was therefore especially vital to their capacity to self-regulate. They reassured themselves (and perhaps me[68]) through frequent assertions that they were 'still making' (P2:1254 and P7:1914). 'Making' being a byword for retaining their practice in any form, as one artist explained, 'it doesn't really matter to me if it's a hobby or not. It seems like the same feeling…if there's nothing going on, but I'm still making work' (P3:3811-3818), ranking purely continuing to make, higher than professional identification. Projections of self-belief were also expressed through positive affirmations, including, ''I'd been to [Art School X], so I could do it' (P9:3943), and 'I think you should think of yourself as a professional' (P12:5336-5345). These assured and potentiating projections of possible selves indicate intentioned self-belief towards *Always* being artists, reflecting their initial motivations for attending art school, as well as an underlying performed professionalism (Lasorsa et al., 2012, cited in Markham, 2017:54).

The possible selves envisaged by the artists surfaced through their hopes and wishes. When I asked what they would wish for today, the varied responses settled around having the freedom to only make. Achieving this varied from wishing for more time, money, space, or stability, and also encompassed considering other artists too. One wished for 'free spaces for all' (P7:2331), and another 'more funding for arts' (P12:5313), highlighting a shared understanding that their struggles for certain freedoms are collectively felt. Other wishes carried nostalgic and regretful undertones, as the artists processed their responsibility over their situations and actions (Tykocinski & Steinberg, 2005). One artist wished, 'to go back to art school, and do it again with the knowledge I have now', lamenting 'I think I'd be better at it…I didn't do it justice…I think I would've done a better job with that life experience' (P1:3521-3549). Others also longed for art school days, one wishing for 'financial abundance' to 'focus

[68] I recognise that the interview situation could have influenced levels of self-belief; being asked to discuss this topic may have facilitated the artists' self-reflection on how they felt their careers were going, even though it was not directly asked.

on my creative practice' and recreate 'all the space and time that I need to be that full time artist that we so relished as students' (P2:1505-1510). In recovery|continuum, art school is reminisced over and represents a certain freedom that briefly satiated desires around '*Only*' making. Others wanted to set up a support hub for 'a community of creatives' (P11:3511), which they hoped would become a 'place where I belong' because, they said 'I haven't found where I belong. Other than by myself' (P11:3586-3594), accentuating a wish for a sense of belonging. Others wished, 'just to continue…in the direction I'm going in and to be able to maintain and sustain a practice that is…supported in the way that I need to be, and to develop and to grow as an artist', adding, 'I always want to be a better artist' (P6:3462-3473), underscoring their commitment to '*Only*' and '*Always*'.

The artists' wishes and actions anticipate specific kinds of freedom and autonomy; to practice long-term, with few (or no) constraints bound to financial and situational stability, consistent with other studies (Banks, 2010; Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Wesner, 2018). However, different to the freedoms of pedagogical structurelessness, in recovery|continuum, this kind of freedom is more urgently sought as artists face a number of threats to their autonomy, and, when greater control over self-regulation is potentiated. I acknowledge my allusion to the inside/outside dichotomy I discussed as an unhelpful binary earlier, however, the two periods (at art school and after), and perhaps *because* of the separation, conspire some differences in the freedoms sought and experienced, namely autonomy and self-regulation.

Autonomy is an ever-present yet elusive possibility in artists' lives (Abbing, 2004; Banks, 2010), historically embedded in discourses surrounding their condition and endeavours. It is no surprise that it surfaces frequently in this study. As outlined in chapter two, the longstanding entanglement of artists and autonomy is attributed to cultural discourse stemming from the 15th century (Bourdieu, 1993) and the Romantic era (Abbing, 2004; Banks, 2010) which separated art and society, and induced an increased awareness of individuality. More recently, autonomy and independence have been considered intrinsic to artistic labour (Smith, 1998; Florida, 2002), argued as having been co-opted by neoliberal ideologies to promote freedom and pleasure at the heart of creative work (McRobbie, 2004; Gillick, 2011). Elsewhere, this is disputed as a fallacy, because it is thought neoliberalism 'already has its own model: the

entrepreneur' (Lazzarato, 2007). As well, autonomy is thought to provision value under capitalism which, 'has no particular interest in fully divesting cultural workers of their autonomy, for to do so would undermine the very basis of the value generated in cultural production' (Banks, 2010:9). According to this critique, without autonomy, artistic work is inherently devalued, appearing as an inescapable part of artists' conditions. Here, I consider artists' autonoetic consciousness of the interdependence of their agency and the social structures in which they operate as enabling novel autonomies.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, for the artists, the 'much vaunted flexibility' or 'informality' (Gill & Pratt, 2008:33), once touted as the dominion of creative labour, was fleeting or illusory. Though this kind permeates some of the artists' wishes, remaining somewhat in service to its mythic potential, the kind of autonomy that motivated the artists in their recovery|continuum was sought in self-regulatory de-mythification in order to reregulate and self-author their stories. My findings show that artists counter accepted discourses that equate artistic autonomy with freedom from the constraints of burdensome subemployment, the market, or commodification. Though I highlight struggles do exist in these areas, I also found artists did not explicitly express that they were, or should be, impervious to other work, but rather recognised its necessity. Additionally, some explicitly sought to monetise their practice, and directly discussed involvements with communities, disavowing the dominant idealised romantic genius, starving artist, or sole producer, and positioning themselves as artists who need community, who consider themselves not as essential individuals, but part of a whole. They also openly discuss their emotional states, of disappointments and traumas associated with art schooling, going against anticipated characterisations (McRobbie, 2016:40), and reflecting the thinking that it is 'necessary to endorse one's cares…to wholeheartedly identify with them, for autonomy to be possible' (Tappolet, 2006:51). These self-regulating behaviours intensify in recovery|continuum as pedagogised identities are further disbanded post art schooling. Critique of the artists' self-regulation aligned to myth and narration are discussed in the next chapter, contextualised under the core categories of identity, myth, freedom, and professionalisation. Here, it is clear, the artists' de/re-regulations of the myths and art schooled ideologies that inform their pedagogised identities, go towards shaping a more

self-authored autonomy, underscoring their professional identities, in which the (re)telling of their own stories maintains and sustains their recovery|continuum.

6.5 Conclusion

Discussion in this chapter highlights the artists' difficult, sometimes impossible, and conflicting, yet necessary adaptations, acceptances, and navigations of the conditions of their recovery|continuum. Professionalisation, which is surfaced through these navigations, is foregrounded through its entanglement with other core categories of identity, myth, and freedom. Artists grapple with the emotional aftereffects of art schooling that encompasses disappointments and propositions of changed times, looking back nostalgically and in hindsight, easing magnitudes of discontent in order to progress. They navigate ideologically split worlds and their newly established positions, juggle the realities of work and practice, and attempt to de/re-mythify to (re)regulate their stories and identities. Ultimately, they forge ways to continue as artists; adapting, adopting, and regulating practices and images of themselves, within the parameters of their new conditions, and always with a resoluteness to prioritise making space for practice. These features of their recovery|continuum, though ordered this way in my discussion, do not occur in a linear fashion, but are undulating and unpredictable, rather than occurring in premeditated or construed ways.

Within these processes are multiple deconstructions, reconciliations, and reconstitutions of the possible selves that continue to motivate them. The unravelling is painful yet purposeful, intentionally recovering identities from pedagogised states and characterisations of artists they have been ascribed, and which they hold as possibilities. Acts of recovery include deliberately adapting practice and breaking with romantic images, as well as seeking to actualise many of the motivations that led them to art school in the first place. This highlights some consistent, albeit often conflicting, needs in these artists' lives, such as, being in London, and looking for opportunities and likemindedness, as well as defying traditional artistic characterisations, through actively seeking subemployment and community, monetising practice, or presenting as openly (and uncharacteristically) emotionally affected. The context of this study, with a particular group of artists from London art schools may, of course, impute these findings. However, perhaps for artists more widely, the most common constituents of

recovery|continuum are in being able to take, or make, opportunities irrespective of location, to have financial and locational/physical stability, intentionally earning their income from jobs and/or practice, and crucially, re-narrating impeding storylines to do this.

In recovery|continuum the artists do not specifically go against structural systems to resist them, but seek to understand their situations, limitations, and possibilities, and attempt to work within the boundaries of their existence within society. I do not suggest they are compliant, submissive, or non-radical. Artists necessarily continue to work outside, and along the borderlines, of considered boundaries, as discussed. Rather, I see artists forging ways of working symbiotically within certain confines, demonstrating understanding that 'personal agency and social structure operate interdependently' (Bandura, 2001:16), and in doing so they re-narrate their stories, both incidentally and through conscious attempts. They want to monetise their practice, not to commodify it, rather for practical means so they can keep making as part of their career, and to avoid impoverishment later on. They do not seek entrepreneurial skills to do this, but they seek to understand the mechanisms of the structure within which they operate and how to exploit this to suit their needs. They want to tell the story of their own myth, yet they also understand that this is not fully in their control and that myths are shaped around them.

The artists strike a balance between autonomy and societal heteronomy, demonstrating astute autonoetic consciousness in the process, resulting in often acute understandings of who they are, how they have been shaped and represented in myth, as well as proposing how they want to be characterised. The autonomy that motivates them is in gaining control over their stories in order to progress. The projected image of possible selves is radically repositioned through these acts of self-regulation that are situated in de/re-mythification. The recovery|continuum period is crucial to this, as the period in which recognitions of their realities are magnified and urgently demand self-regulatory action. Artists need a sense of self-regulated autonomy, as indeed everyone does (Deci & Ryan, 2000), they are not unique in that sense. But, rather than follow the pursuit of romanticised or capitalist ideals, their pursuit in recovery|continuum is in authoring and

resituating their potential and possible selves; selves that are analysed as multiple, mutable, motivating, and competing in the next chapter.

Chapter 7
7. THE CONSTANT TUSSLE
Identity, Myth, Freedom, & Professionalisation

7.1
Introduction

In this chapter I bring together and analyse my findings from the previous three chapters. I developed the core categories presented here through a final stage of theoretical sampling. Through *Finding the Findings* coding, detailed in chapter three (and Appendix 11), I coded the first thesis draft, framing and sorting the findings from chapters four, five, and six. I raised the core categories of *Identity*, *Myth*, *Freedom*, and *Professionalisation*, and discovered a fifth category interwoven throughout the others which is *Tensions, Conflicts, & Contradictions*. I analyse these here, consolidating my findings and developing these five core categories to present the overall discoveries of this study into artists' perspectives and experiences of undergraduate fine art education.

In section 7.2, I outline the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions that art schooling created for the artists. I highlight its interwovenness throughout the other four core categories, with its greatest impact being on the artists' identities. These identities are shown to be influenced by tensions underlying professional pedagogies, myth, and affordances/constrictions of freedoms. I discuss the ongoing effects on the artists' careers, practices, and lives, particularly on their senses of legitimation and validation, capacities for self-regulation, and struggles for freedoms around making. In section 7.3, I discuss *Artists' Multiple Identities* and the influences of tensions. I consider *Special & Different* identities, not discussed until now, and give an overview of the artists' distinctive identities that are traceable throughout the findings chapters. I discuss the identities as overlapping, motivating, and compromising, shaped as such through art schooling. In section 7.4, I present the core category of myth, discerning relationships between myths, the artists, and the art school. I develop insight into artists' folding art schooled myths into their lives, as inextricably entangled facets of their identities, motivational tools, and instruments of resistance, expanding definition of the term *De/re-mythification*. In section 7.5, I outline the core category of freedom, positioning what the artists said as speech acts towards practices of freedom,

comprising acts of congruence, negation, and, de/re-mythification. I present the term profound-reified-autonomies which describes relativised and finite freedoms the artists sought and gleaned through art school. I detail what these freedoms entail, foregrounding the ways in which they are navigated and enacted through the tensions art schooling conspired. Finally, in section 7.6, I define the boundaries of the artists' co-negotiated professional identities I found were formed through navigations of particular art school pedagogies, myths, and freedoms, and the tensions therein. I foreground the relationship artists have with art schooled professional identifications stemming from professional pedagogies, highlighting the importance of recognising transformation and asserting agentic capacities in these navigations.

In discussing these core categories, I refer to a range of extant theory. To analyse the artists' identities I consider Lindemann's (2014) notion of impossible identities, and Stets (2005) on emotional surfacing and regulating of identities. On myth's symbolic meaning, I refer to Hawthorne (2006) and Ricœurian (1967) concepts. In connecting myth with identities, I consider Breakwell's (1986) discussion on threatened identities and Lindemann's (2014) concepts of holding on and letting go. On the topic of freedom, I raise Foucault's (1997[1984]) concept of practices of freedom as representations of self-care. I build on my performative inquiry that developed findings related to actions and *doing* in the artists' speech presented in the previous chapters, applying Arendt's (1958) speech to action theory in analysing what the artists said as actions that constitute practices of freedom. I combine this with Ricœurian (1950) thinking on the finiteness and relativity of freedoms available in given situations. These theories inform discussion on professionalisation, as well as Paquette (2012), Nicolini and Roe (2014), Lammers and Garcia (2017), and Stahl (2011), which broaden and connect understanding of the relationships between institutions, identities, and myths, with the artists' professional identities.

7.2
Tensions, Conflicts, & Contradictions

Throughout this study, the artists' identities, practices, careers, and continuums are shown to contain deep tensions, incompatible conflicts, and challenging contradictions. I have found that attending art school fosters this through professional pedagogies that perpetuate myths and maintain both affordances and constrictions of freedoms (related

to myths of *Only* making) through enforced structureless. Tensions are the cause of great emotional distress and ongoing discontent, creating obstacles in the artists' continuing to define themselves as artists, continuing to make, or in carrying out a professional career. In particular the artists' identities are affected. These are negotiated *through* the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions, that stem from art schooling. Tensions are directed into ongoing navigations that define the professional identities of these art schooled artists. This makes the artists' relationships with art schooling and professional identities unpredictable, turbulent, elusive, and challenging for themselves and others to define.

Tension represents an ontological dimension for the art schooled artists I interviewed. It is embedded in their discussions of luck, skill, and talent, around being chosen or accidentally attending art school. The key categories of negation and self-ledness exemplify the artists' grappling with tensions that are caught between art school legitimation (structure/context) and self-definition (agency/conduct). The relationship with myth is complex and contradictory, found to be simultaneously necessary and enabling, yet also unhelpful and constricting. Occasionally, where de/re-mythification is overt, there are also unconscious endorsements of other myths, displaying a tussle between embracing and refusing myths. There is conflict between core motivating identities *Always & Only* (and *Special & Different* I discuss shortly), which though informed by myth and representative of possible selves, they jar with promotions of group membership, subemployment, or pauses in practice, countering these identities and influencing their (inconsistent) availability.

Contradictions arise elsewhere in wanting, seeking, and needing stability, yet fearing and avoiding stability traps that certain work and subemployment raise. The fear being constrictions over one's freedoms to make. Tension continues to rise around work, in accepting the compromised freedoms it entails, as well as the promotion of subemployment as a deterrent to the apparent privilege that full-time making is perceived to occasion. Conflict runs through the seeking of freedoms to '*Only*' make, that become contorted because those freedoms, when offered through art school, are found difficult or impossible to capture, due to the fallacy (and mythology) of structurelessness. This causes tensions after art school when freedoms are experienced

as more elusive, owing to the artificial freedoms afforded in the art school bubble. The inside/outside dichotomy causes another contradiction in itself, creating an artifice for artist-students and artist-graduates to navigate, extending tensions around the values attributed to 'real world' identities, and thus 'artificial' ones 'inside' art school. This poses particular challenges to (professional) identity work carried out at art school and after. Further struggles emerge around the lure of London art schools and the apparent need for London as an 'escape' (P10:262), to sell their 'wares' (P9:5987), and in gaining necessary recognition. These are disturbed when met with experiences of how challenging it is to survive in this 'real world' city that is fast becoming uninhabitable for artists (Yeo & Miller, 2017).

In many of these conflicted scenarios lies a persistent tussle over powers of definition, of who determines artists; the art school, myth and stories, or artists themselves. In actuality, definitions are situated within constant and ongoing negotiations between these influential and entangled factors. Artists can be the artists of their own definition, the artists of the art school's definition, and the artists of the art world and varying societal and mythic definitions (see Breakwell, 1986:10), which converge at different points. It is at the core of this dynamic, however, that tension manifests around the possible mediations of prospective, imaginable, adaptable, yet vulnerable and somewhat threatened identities in potentia, in a profession that is also in flux and unstable (Teather, 1990 cited in Paquette, 2012:10). Negotiations take place between many different parties to differing ends. Potential identities, for artists or anyone, are under perpetual de/reconstruction, and there are also potential threats. Breakwell (1986:7) outlines our capacity to de/reconstruct and maintain unthreatened identities, stating it requires, 'continuity in self-definition, the vitalising effects of distinctiveness and the crucial role of self-esteem'. The art school operates as a mediator of these aspects of identity formation, potentially supporting and fostering self-efficacy, independence, individuality, and self-authorship, yet possibly threatening or entirely eliminating these. At art school the artists were caught between having their identities and interconnected practices legitimised, yet also threatened, and, while sometimes validated and accepted, they were also marginalised and excluded, or permanently damaged. This unknown quantity of art schooling is the basis of much of the artists' tensions and challenges, which recur throughout their identities and practices beyond

art school. This is exemplified through the pursuing of other validators and legitimation that were often accumulative of art schooled endorsements such as attending alumni events or seeking inclusion in communities of practice. Pursuing validation avoided threats in developing and maintaining post-pedagogised and professional identifications.

Undeniably, these art schooled artists live with and through tensions, conflicts, and, contradictions. They grapple with why they attended art school, and how it legitimated them, or not, while being somewhat trapped in systems and stories that preordained that they were art schooled regardless. Furthermore, the parameters of their identities and practices are in continuing dialogue with the art schools they attended and the surrounding institutions of art and education. In navigating art schooled tensions and the threats they pose, the dynamic between their agency and the institution is played out through ongoing balancing and equivalencing, through sacrificing, adapting, and accepting, and by feeling and trusting. This art schooled condition is entangled with institutional powers over legitimation and discourse which reproduce the myths and affordances/constrictions of freedoms that underlie these conflicted scenarios, shaping the artists' futures. While tension might be a potential resource that motivates artists, it also lays down a rocky, uneven, and sometimes altogether impassable path to traverse. In the following sections I expand on what these paths entail, beginning with tension's effects on the artists' identities.

7.3
Identity

ARTISTS' MULTIPLE, MUTABLE, MOTIVATING, & COMPETING IDENTITIES

Educational settings across disciplines, including law (Alexander, 2011) and medicine (Goldie, 2012), are considered predominant sites for identity work. Art schools also have a distinct role in professional identity work (Becker, 1982; Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Orr & Shreeve, 2018). Throughout this study, I have developed understanding of this identity work, and in this section, I further this by outlining the multiple overlapping, motivating, and competing identities that I found to be shaped through the artists' art schooling. I begin by defining *Special & Different* identities; a commonly referred to, but as yet undefined identity facet. I also review the multiple artist identities

that have surfaced throughout the findings chapters, discussing the interrelationships between them and identity's prevalence in this study.

7.3.1 Special & Different Identities

Special & Different identities surface throughout the preceding chapters, defined by what I call *Separation Motifs*; the differentiating devices the artists interspersed throughout their conversations with me. They are demonstrable of a deeply entrenched part of the artists' identification, and informed by discourse related to myth. I have issued subtle hints[69] and overt traces of these identities throughout the findings chapters, but have withheld discussion because of their absolute entanglement and inseparable diffraction through many, if not all, of the categories discussed so far. Having formulated this networked association with a number of other categories through the cats-cradling and connective post-it note processes during Selective coding (see figure 19, p.95), it is a major contributing factor in analysis throughout this chapter, and study.

Depictions of artists as special and different to others in society are highlighted in other studies (Becker, 1982; Taylor & Littleton, 2012; Wesner, 2018). It is not a new phenomenon. However, I contextualise it as embedded in the artists' motivations in attending art school, their reactions when there, and as affecting them afterwards. *Special & Different* shapes *who* they are, as well as *what* they do, and variously *how* they go about it. This identification results from a two-way process; the othering of themselves, and being othered by institutions, pedagogies, other people (including artists/tutors), and myths. I am aware this could imply a sense of distinctiveness, potentially countering arguments I advance elsewhere. In chapter six, for example, I discuss the artists' deliberate acts to dismantle myths of singularity, instead positioning themselves as community members, eschewing ideas of the lone artist or sole producer. Indeed, this overlays the unique-artist image to an extent, exerting a particular tension between assertions of singularity and projections of common character.

Nevertheless, the artists' 'othering' of themselves appeared as intentional acts of separation. In chapter four, assertions of atypicality among family in attending art school (P2:871), expressly following their own path (P6:3521), and of feeling accepted

[69] For instance, appearing in chapter three in an example of 'connective' post-it notes.

as 'different' in London (P8:3129) are made. In chapter five, comparisons with other artist-students are submitted over capacity for independent ability (P11:3680), and of others being more 'professionalised' today (P6:1165). Chapter six sees artists isolating themselves (P11:1000 & 3586), evading common romantic tropes (P9:2982, P6:1027), and detaching themselves from issues they raise as affecting 'other' artists (P12:2543). As well, throughout the interviews the artists suggested they didn't fit in, working best in total isolation (P11:712 & 1007), or defining themselves as the 'odd-one-out' (P3:1298). One identified as non-conforming, commenting, 'I was very much sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll' (P5:886), and 'it's the natural rebel in me' (P5:3724). Another asserted 'I wanted to be different. And I was different' (P1:414), alluding to controlling their 'difference', and conveying the kind of 'vitalising effects of distinctiveness', that Breakwell (1985:7), noted earlier, suggests avoids threatened identities.

Othering also occurred via the institutions and people surrounding the artists. This was seen in the painful recollections of gendered, racialised, and class-based alienation (P2:1105; P6:512; P8:686; P5:2382; P10:4073; P11:2414). Encounters of marginalisation ensued through assessments and structureless pedagogies, noted in chapter five as inducing unequal exclusions, and influencing the discontent discussed in chapter six. The artists also struggled with restrictive art schooled myths around how artistic labour can be anticipated or conveyed to others (P12:2070). These myths underlie othering processes; they tell artists they *are* 'different'. A reason for this is perhaps that a convenient aspect of myth is the commodifiable preservation of 'exceptionalism' that drives economic return (see Wesner, 2018:24). These myths are folded into their stories during their studies, and rejected later as impeding to progress. Tensions rise in *Special & Different* identities as they are revered and maintained, while also being somewhat refused. Notably, resistance arose when the artists were not the conveyers of their own stories, when their identities were perhaps threatened by potentially harmful myths, motioning my point from chapter six of artists' needs around self-regulation, captured in de/re-mythification, and underscoring their narrating of their own 'difference'.

I found art schools instilling myths of specialness, through storylines of luck and structureless pedagogies. Being chosen to attend these institutions, that are themselves

held in special regard, is translated into validation of one's distinctive ability, deepening 'belief in "special talent"' (Wesner, 2018:28). This is compounded by specific art school assessment processes (Atkinson, 2002:116), including C/crits that engender particular learner identities tied to specific schools. The surrounding rhetoric of specialness, of London art schools in particular (see Tate, 2020c, and Llewellyn, 2015), bolster the phenomenon through intended, even if self-interested (Beck & Cornford, 2018), brand boosting cycles. Cultural theorists also still define and hold artists and art schools as special, even if disputed as being relinquished among the 'small world of cultural and media studies' (Toynbee, 2013:85). Artist-students are held as having 'a different kind of learning style' (Tynan & New, 2009:297). The art school is positioned outside/above the influence of policy (Crippa, 2014), and its distinct pedagogy is deemed unlike others (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:115). Specialness is upheld by alumni too, as one artist commented, 'I took away these kinds of experiences; fascinating, unique moments, that no-one else would have, really, if you went to a normal university' (P1:3055-3071); their special experiences only available from an institution held as unequivocally special. Upholding artists' 'specialness' while insulating art school's eminence is a key feature of *Special & Different* identities. Next, I review other identities found in this study.

7.3.2 Identities Review

Though not an exhaustive list, the identities I contextualise here were discussed in the findings chapters due to my interpretations of the artists' assertions in their interviews. The characterisations I offer are intentionally flexible, and embody thinking around self-concept (in)consistency as desirable projections, rather than attainable potentials. I recognise that 'self-consistency does not mean *actual* consistency and continuity in self-conception, but rather the *sense* or perception of consistency' and that 'we have a tendency to *create* a sense of self-consistency even if consistency and continuity may not in fact exist' (Gecas, 1982:24, original emphasis). I understand this is bound to memory and perceptions and projections of temporally located selves (Lee & Oyserman, 2012; Conway & Loveday, 2015). My observations encompass the artists' fluctuating commitment to, and capacity to access and perform these identities in their interviews in moments of congruence (Lee & Oyserman, 2012). They are:

7.3.2.1 Temporal

These identities form the backdrop to the artists' actions, and inactions, influenced by past, present, and future selves. They encompass ideas of mutable agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998), and that temporally located identities converge and influence others. They comprise fragments of memories and imagined identities based on temporal constructions (Conway & Loveday, 2015; Klein, 2013). Temporality is embedded through the other identities.

7.3.2.2 Possible & Impossible

Closely linked to temporal, these distinct, yet interconnected identities form the basis for the artists' motivations, hopes and wishes, and of navigations through possible and impossible realities. Many subsequent identities are transposed between these.

7.3.2.3 Personal

Personal Identities refer to the artists' personal lives that surfaced throughout the study. Rather than implying philosophical concepts (see Olson, 2017), they relate to demographic details including parents, children, and partners, as well as class, gender, and ethnicity which featured most predominantly.

7.3.2.4 Mythologised

These identities are constructed through various 'myth messengers' (Wesner, 2018), including anecdotes and stories stemming from the art world, the art school, cultural theory, families and friends, and artists themselves. They are inflected through the artists' core decisions, and are highly motivating, but often less consciously so, causing conflicts and also opportunities.

7.3.2.5 Always & Only

'*Always*' and '*Only*' are symbiotically conjoined, forming *Always & Only* identities. They represent a major motivational force, driven by an unwavering foundational and emotive identification as '*Always*' being an artist, and desiring situations of '*Only*' being so. These identities were significantly projected and recurrently effected beliefs, attitudes, and actions, before, during, and after art schooling. I found '*Always*' identities to be *always* present in some form, differing from studies that find these to be particularly available to aspirants (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:49). These identities also

fit Ricœur's descriptions of both *Idem* identities, denoting 'sameness and permanence through time and space' (Ericson & Kjellander, 2018), and *Ipse* identities, which 'concerns selfhood in the sense of change and interrupted continuity' (ibid.). Though *Always & Only* feature consistently, like other identities, they are not *always* available or *only* achievable, but fluctuate through different instances. Deep tensions permeate these identities, stemming from art school pedagogies and perpetuated myths.

7.3.2.6 Special & Different

See section 7.3.1

7.3.2.7 Learner

These identities are projected as part of a 'learning' or 'learned' self. They are constructed for and through assessment processes experienced at art school (see Atkinson, 2002:116), and the 'mutually constitutive relations of pedagogic and scholarly practice' (Knights, 2005, cited in Tynan & New, 2009:296), that occur at art school. They specifically relate to agentic projections of assessed ability and of wanting to be seen as a 'particular kind of learner' (Atkinson, 2002:116) in the interviews.

7.3.2.8 Pedagogised

These identities relate to institutional identities that are co-constructed in the practice-based educational settings of art schools (see Atkinson, 2002), informed through dialogue with artist-teachers' *(Post-/)Pedagogised* identities. They encompass the weight of the institutions of 'art' and 'education', theoretically, physically, and metaphorically. They are co-created through art schooling, incorporating the absorbed, osmosed, imagined, projected, supposed, and believed identities that result from intra-actions between other performers that operate within these institutions.

7.3.2.9 Post-Pedagogised

These identities are both institutionally formulated and agentially situated as part of the self-concept. They are the deliberately contorted, pushed and pulled de/reconstructions of *Pedagogised Identities*, manifesting through the artists' recovery|continuums post art school. They are realised through subemployment, becoming artist-teachers, and adaptations and recoveries towards ongoing professional identity work. Certain values

of *Pedagogised Identities* are retained, drawn on in certain social settings, but mostly they conspire freedom from impossible selves.

7.3.2.10 Professional

Artists' professional identities are the most flexible and contain elements of all of the above. As much as possible the artists self-define professional identities, as per their self-regulatory behaviours. These identities incorporate 'professional acts' such as attending art school, and continuing to 'act professionally' through pursuing recognition, being responsible, and planning for future professional acts. Indeed, 'performative professional identity is as much about tone as anything' (Lasorsa et al. 2012, cited in Markham, 2017:54). These identities are not only represented in the act of doing, but in motivational attitudes, and future projected professional identities.

Next, I discuss the relationships between these identities.

7.3.3 Interrelations & The Prevalence of Identity

Identity theories often discuss dealing with identities in question (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000), considered 'impossible' (Lindemann, 2014), or 'marked' (Piazza R & Fasulo, 2015). Focus highlights the dilemmas these identities pose for those considered to have them, and surrounding people. For example, those at the end of life, with mental incapacity, or who don't fit within binary gender definitions (Lindemann, 2014). I do not suggest that the artists' identities are 'in question' per se, nor wholly 'impossible' or even 'marked', but they are complex, contradictory, diverse, and variable, making them somewhat awkward to place. I have found that, though often narrowly defined in myth, 'The' artist identity does not exist, rather pluralities of mutable identities undulate, oscillate, and alternate.

The interrelations between the identities discussed above, are constantly shifting, overlapping, and intersecting. There are no fixed boundaries between them. They are each entangled with the others, and framed by their associations, interconnections, and tensions. The timbre of each reverberates against and through the others as they co-exist together. They contain and are contained by past, present, and future temporally located *Possible* and *Impossible* selves that drive motivation, interest, and action. These identities, along with *Mythologised* identities, intersect *Always & Only*

and *Special & Different* selves. Overlapping these, *Learner*, *Pedagogised*, *Post-Pedagogised*, and *Professional* identities tussle and contort, absorbing, rejecting, and potentially balancing one another. The parameters of these multiple, motivating, competing, and compromising identities are negotiated through art schooling. Suspended in the emotional embeddedness of these experiences, they are asserted across varying conditions before, during, and after art school.

The prevalence of identity in this study, as introduced in chapter two, ripples through each chapter. In chapter four, identity is discussed as instigated by the interview setting (Oyserman et al. 2017), through having been asked to participate, awareness of the proposed topic, and the questions I asked. In chapter five, learner identities are situated within a desire to act congruently, and available professional identities were considered perhaps undefinable or unstable due to an unpredictable professional field (see Teather, 1990, cited in Paquette, 2012:10). In chapter six, identity manifests through discussion of emotionally turbulent recoveries, and the artists' navigations of tensions, conflicts, and contradictions. I found they attempted to (re)establish and (re)situate themselves during our conversations. The artists' assertions of themselves in the interviews, in sometimes unconstrained emotionally embedded ways, is a form of ongoing identity work in itself, which led to my interpretations of their multiple identities. I did not ask them if they considered themselves artists, which would have directly questioned their identities, yet they appeared to want to justify this. This could be a common pressure, given the artists' accounts of justifications in different settings (P4:5401-5452; P12:2600-2629). However, my questions asked them to recall a time in which significant identity work would have been carried out (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:81), necessarily bringing this to mind. I consider these identities to have surfaced through desires to act in congruence, predominantly with *Always & Only* and *Special & Different* selves, expressing control over self-authorship, towards (relative) autonomy that underlies this.

Another factor in identity surfacing is foregrounded in my finding the artists' identities to be deeply emotionally seated, and that art schooling creates particularly emotionally unsettling and conflicting experiences. Discussions in chapters five and six on C/crit involvement and group membership/exclusions, and in the supposed freedoms of

structurelessness contrasted by the artifice created by the inside/outside dichotomy exemplify this. The artists' acting congruently towards these emotionally seated identities, highlighted in chapter four's discussions on motivation, can be understood as a form of control/self-regulation over those identities and embedded emotions. Indeed, identity control theories suggest,

> Continuous congruence (identity verification) registers positive emotion; incongruence, or a lack of identity verification (in either a positive or a negative direction) that cannot be handled automatically within the self-regulatory system, registers negative emotion.
>
> (Stets, 2005:39)

Though this roughly polarises positive and negative emotions, which may operate in more nuanced ways, it is also considered that 'if a prominent identity has been threatened [such as *Always & Only* and *Special & Different*] (by others who do not support one's role performance) [such as by the C/crit or structurelessness], an individual should experience a negative emotional response' (McCall & Simmons, 1978, cited in Stets, 2005:39). This further develops understanding of the disclosures of disappointments, pain, and trauma, discussed in chapter six. The artists' magnitudes of discontent and that they imply the art school's responsibility, through employing either hindsight or nostalgia to ease this (Tykocinski & Steinberg, 2005), show these artists' experiences of art schooling cast as much doubt over their identities as it may have verified. The unpicking and unpacking of this result in artists' stories (and lives) containing emotionally seated tensions, conflicts, and contradictions. These are somewhat reconciled over time through adaptations and acceptance, and through constructing post-pedagogised identities. However, tensions are also entangled with other factors, with myth being a key influence due to its interconnectedness with identity, particularly the ways in which stories (and identities) are fabricated, perpetuated, and cause tension, as discussed next.

7.4
Myth

DE/RE-MYTHIFICATION

Ricœurian (1967) theories highlight that 'myth points to a connection between our essential realities and our actual historical existence' (Malan, 2016:2), foregrounding myth's correlation with the human condition. This indicates myth's ontological dimension, and invites us to recognise that 'realities' are shaped by myth, and that artistic myths shape artists' 'realities'. This includes the artists' perspectives, beliefs, motivations, actions, and inactions discussed in this study. Considering myth's ontology aids understanding of how the artists navigate, utilise, and also reject elements of (art schooled) myths. I have found they fold myth, with its motivations and tensions, into their ways of being as they move through their careers. Understanding this informs dialogue on artists' needs, potentially assisting appropriate changes in educational and cultural policy, a discussion furthered in chapter eight.

Because myths are retellings of historical stories with social significance (Bain, 2005; Hawthorne, 2006) ceded through myth messengers (Wesner, 2018), the myths I refer to in this section are understood to have been formed across various organisations and individuals. Some were discussed by the artists as specifically located in the art schools. I detail these and others in this section, alongside the particular tensions they invoked and the subsequent de/re-mythification undertaken by the artists. I position this as a form of affective labour, understood to require 'high levels of intimacy, care, or emotions' (Lazzarato, 1999, cited in McRobbie, 2011b:62), which is necessarily employed to discharge tensions created by art school influenced myths. I also consider the moral dimension and the significance of when, who by, and how myths are held and let go of, and the effects this has on the artists.

7.4.1 De/re-Mythification: Corrupting, Retaining, & Sustaining Art Schooled Myths

Here I expand on discussion introduced in chapter six on de/re-mythification enacted through the artists' recovery|continuums as attempts to overcome impeding myths. Explicit de/re-mythification occurred through denials of what were considered unhelpful labels of 'romantic' or 'starving' artist, in order to escape limiting beliefs about financial potential (P2:850), or to eschew unsustainable markers of achievement, that were more highly revered if achieved through sufficient hardship (P9:2982). One

artist specifically challenged mystical ideologies in order to be seen as a regular worker and feel permitted to request decent remuneration for their labour (P12:2070-2096), also suggesting specific ways to dismantle these to improve their career chances (P12:2543). I considered how this awareness of myths' influence was ceded through the artists' autonoetic consciousness and diachronicity, since none of them explicitly discussed transparent ways in which the art schools dealt with the influences of artistic myth, or even expressed any consciousness of their role in myth making/maintenance. I redress this here, critiquing the tensions invoked by art schooled myths. Once revealed, these impeding myths could be addressed and perhaps made transparent and/or diminished.

The explicit examples above were coupled with incidental de/re-mythification. This either went unnoticed by the artists as de/re-mythification, or were entirely unrecognised as connected to mythic interpretations of artists. Occurrences of the first kind corrupt characterisations of artists, both art schooled and more broadly. These included: asserting preferences for community, aligning with theories which position art making as a social activity over a sole endeavour (Becker, 1982); supplanting supposedly inherent rebelliousness with being responsible; indicating their being 'regular' people with jobs, families, and mortgages, who are strategic, and conscientious; overthrowing economic reversal through assertions of earning, acceptances of working multiple jobs, and through monetising strategies that do not rely on commodifying object-centred practices, but demand remuneration for *all* artistic work; and, instead of conveying themselves as 'cheerful' or 'exuberant' (McRobbie, 2016:40), being emotionally vulnerable about their discontentment attached to art schooling.

Elsewhere, myths were engaged with, but went unrecognised as myths. For example, in the assertions of being lucky discussed in chapter four, and accounts of precarity in chapter six. Luck is interwoven with the artist-genius figure, whose young life is destined by serendipitous chances, and fortuitously preordained talent (Kris & Kurz, 1979[1934]:28). The artists attributed luck to their attending art school, as well as influencing their professional careers when securing residencies, studios, and even just continuing. They did not notice, or perhaps did not want/feel the need to address, its

alignment with myth. Furthermore, when luck was advanced by the art school as necessary to artistic careers, it was viewed positively as delivering transparency over managing expectations. Precarity is also never related by the artists to mythic characterisation, even though it often defines artists (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011). Associations are entangled with idealised artistic labour (Gill & Pratt, 2008), and with political identities of resistance to austere conditions of neoliberalism (McRobbie, 2016:84). Its links with the mythic starving artist, translated into a marker of an artistic career (see P9:2982-3004), and separateness from other social groups are also engrained at its core. However, positioning precarity as part of artistic myth is not to fictionalise the adversity of its experience. Rather, it highlights a recent re-mythification, in the perpetually mythologised lives and identities of artists. In the artists' stories I found precarity, that is representative of the starving artist, to be dependent on its counterpart luck, which represented myth's artist-genius trope (see Wesner, 2018 on myth binary).

That the artists often did not notice themselves de/re-mythifying, is suggestive that myths and mythic characteristics do not often (or no longer) reflect artists' professional realities. For instance, eschewing all forms of commodification is not feasible (Vishmidt, 2011), neither is total isolation, nor being consistently rebelliousness, or exuberant. Additionally, artists pertaining to art schooled storylines of luck that subscribe to myths of preordained talent(/genius) or future successes, can neglect responsibility, heighten disappointment, and embed emotional tension when lucky existences do not come to fruition. Its counterpart, precarity, is also unsustainable, causing tension through its connection with the myth (and fallacy) of being able to '*Only*' be an artist that is embedded through structurelessness. Precarity is the condition in which the artists were seemingly suspended in these beliefs, until realising they 'couldn't hack it' (P9:2982-3004). However, while these 'charismatic expectations' (Røyseng et al., 2007:9) corroborate studies that suggest artists 'do not stop believing in the magical aspects of "life as an artist"' (ibid.), (even if precarity is not 'magical' itself, the mythic emblem it connotes is romanticised), the complex tensions in art schooled myths are also notable. Rather than being innocently bypassed, these unnoticed or unaddressed myths of luck and precarity, are representative of myths that are also considered useful. This might explain why they mostly go unchallenged, and

are adopted in professional contexts. Indeed, other studies show artists utilise myths in their professional career development (Bain, 2005; Wesner, 2018). These art schooled myths are preserved and sustained because they are motivating. Luck has an enabling dimension, drawing on the notion of hope and maintained as a motivator, justifying the artists' carrying on because this myth, entrenched through art schooling, suggests that one day, with a bit of luck, they will make it. Precarity is also maintained, perhaps as the politicised identity it was instigated as (McRobbie, 2016:84), yet also underlying commitment to artistic struggle, as a mythic marker of continued and persevered practice (P2:880; P6:2843; P9:2997). This complexity highlights that key to understanding the effect of myths on artists' lives, is in understanding the tensions they create in their identities and practices, and the value ascribed to them *by artists themselves*.

7.4.2 Myth-Magnets: Holding On & Letting Go

The discussion above illustrates artistic myths in processes of being held and let go. Indeed, as 'identity-constituting stories' (Lindemann, 2014:142), myths necessarily fluctuate. Myths contribute to a constant de/restabilising of identities, occurring through responsive processes of holding on and letting go that happen between agents (ibid.:x). We are understood to be 'initiated into personhood though interactions with other persons, and we simultaneously develop and maintain personal identities through interactions with others who hold us in our identities' (ibid.). This form of subjectification, is not straightforward however, because, 'it is not just that we do not see [others] for who they are, we also require them to be the selves that we see' (Markham, 2017:6). Due to this we can never fully know an 'other', and moreover, the visions we create to view others through are formulated through variously 'incited performance[s] of subjectivity' (Butler, 1993, cited in Markham, 2017:9). Through enactments of subjectification we not only require others to be selves in our vision, we also hold them in the places we want them to be (Lindemann, 2014). I have questioned what I 'hold' onto as an artist, researcher, and person with my own constructed and mythologised identities approaching this topic. Do I release artists from being held in ways that are helpful/unhelpful or otherwise? Am I further entrenching some grips that keep us held? What is my moral responsibility here? And, what was it in the interview, given that in those situations 'the holder is performing her own identity and there are

often other actors in the scene who must also be held in their identities' (ibid.:94)? Holding ranges in consequences for the held, especially if we 'hold people too long in identities that no longer serve them, preventing them from moving on fully to identities that do' (ibid.:x). It is these kinds of held identities, formulated through mythification, that I found the artists were aware of and resistant to today.

I have discussed how some mythologised identities are sustained by the artists, however, some held identities are impossible or unendurable, not only affecting artists. Many people are held 'in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being' (Taylor, 1992, cited in Lindemann, 2014:110). Repercussions of being held in impossible identities are described as,

> When the identity-constituting stories circulating widely in your society allow you to be understood only as [a starving/romantic/isolated/genius artist, for example]… There is no place for you anywhere, because there is no way for others to make sense of you. And what is worse, there's also no way for you to make sense of yourself.
>
> (Lindemann, 2014:142)

For centuries artists have had their identities held, in life and death, in the (predominantly androcentric) and narrow descriptions of others; by institutions, art 'his'tories, museums, galleries, art schools, and art markets. They have remained held in impossible mythic identities. As Lindemann (ibid.:143) suggests of impossible identities; they will remain until they become instead representations of how the held want to be treated.

Being held and/or let go has a moral dimension, and Lindemann questions whether there can be 'good-enough holding and appropriate letting go' (ibid.:xiii). For these artists, I feel the question now is - how 'applicable' is existing 'holding', given that many myths appear in this study to either invoke tension, are being surpassed, or are inappropriate and outmoded? Instead, the onus might be on intentional releasing from the grip of being held. De/re-mythification becomes a vital form of identity work, aiding the release from the grip of unhelpful framings. Active de/re-mythification, requires an understanding of their mythic existence and involves consciously folding myth into acts of resistance to (re)narrate their own stories as acts of self-regulated

autonomy. However, as the term suggests, de/re-mythification also incurs myths. After all, it is impossible not to be held by others due to the social nature of identity construction. Myths might change, but artists remain sticky myth-magnets, unable to escape mythification.

Although the onus appears to be on artists' taking control of their mythification, I do not suggest they should, or even could, carry this out. This would mythologise them further. Indeed, in response to capitalism 'the artist' is expected to be 'a servant of society who has the moral role to reveal the workings of ideology by pointing to the truth' and furthermore, 'the artist who does not recognize the workings of ideology is complicit with an oppressive system' (Willette, 2010). Discourses like these feed into myths, becoming anticipations. While de/re-mythification is an active mode of resistance and a form of self-regulation undertaken by artists, myths are collectively de/reconstructed through a range of players and settings. These include educational and cultural policy makers, curriculum designers, cultural theorists, and gallerists, as well as in wider media, and more locally, around the dinner table and down the pub. Myths, and their de/reconstruction, are the responsibility of us all. Next, I foreground the artists' entanglement with another collectively shaped and influential system, that of freedom.

7.5
Freedom

PROFOUND-REIFIED-AUTONOMIES

In this section, I discuss the artists' actions and assertions that have permeated the findings chapters as practices of freedom, highlighting the prevalence of freedom and how it is embedded in the artists' identities and lives. This core category was developed through the performative processes I used in Axial coding (see figures 10, 12, 13, pp.89-91), finding the actions in what the artists said through my conceptualising through doing, speaking, moving (and singing), which informed my tracing of various freedoms throughout the previous chapters. Here, I contextualise the *Acts of Congruence & Assertions of Self-Determination*, *Acts of Negation & Assertions of Self-Ledness*, and *Acts of De/re-mythification & Assertions of Self-Regulation* as practices of freedom. Following Foucault's (1997[1984], cited in Rabinow, 1997) theories on freedom and self-care, I consider these to be integrated with a 'care of the

self' (ibid.:284). Foucault's perspective underscores these practices as exercises 'of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain to a certain mode of being' (ibid.:282). I found the artists' practices of freedom were intended to counter and resolve the emotional fallouts, tensions, conflicts, and contradictions advanced through art schooling. Specifically, these practices signal resistance to powers within mythic discourse (Foucault, cited in Burr, 1995), against unwanted constraints and/or validations stemming from art schooled myths.

In revealing the artists' (emotional) self-regulation and self-determination through my 'analysis of their talk' (Taylor, 2007:5), I expose underlying ongoing (and plural) identity work. I underscore the tensions in these practices between the artists' agencies and the powers of both the art school and myth as interdependent structures. Embedded in these relations is that 'the practice of freedom is conditioned and constrained by visible, intangible and invisible forms of power' (Whelan & Ryan, 2018:13), and that freedom being granted (or not) is a plural process (Arendt, 1958). I foreground this thinking as I outline the freedoms perceived to be (temporarily) attainable, if at all, beginning by addressing the relationship between action and freedom.

7.5.1 Action to Freedom

According to Arendt (1958, 1961), action is the realiser of freedom because freedom can only exist through actions performed in concert with others (D'Entrèves, 2019). I utilise this lens to consider actions in the artists' speech, through their performances to me (and imagined audiences). In the findings chapters I describe various assertions. Here, I position them as performative acts towards freedoms, in which their 'discursive practice…enacts or produces that which it names' (Butler, 1993:13). I pair assertions of self-determination, self-ledness, and self-regulation with acts of congruence, acts of negation, and acts of de/re-mythification, to convey the indirectness of acts captured in assertions (Pagin, 2016). In interpreting assertions and propositions as speech acts, or 'illocutions' (see Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), I refer to Arendt's concept which suggests,

> *Action entails speech*: by means of language we are able to articulate the meaning of our actions and to coordinate the actions of a plurality of agents. Conversely, *speech entails action*, not only in the sense that speech itself is a form of action, or that most

> acts are performed in the manner of speech, but in the sense that action is often the means whereby we check the sincerity of the speaker.
>
> (D'Entrèves, 2019, original emphasis)

I uphold that speech acts are necessarily 'defined by plurality' (D'Entrèves, 2019). Indeed, Arendt suggests, 'action needs plurality in the same way that performance artists need an audience; without the presence and acknowledgment of others, action would cease to be a meaningful activity' (ibid.). I make the artists' speech acts effective by pluralising them through others, which extends to the other artists, me, and readers of this thesis. I acknowledge that interpreting speech acts is vulnerable to subjective interpretation. However, I believe, like Markham (2017:183), that 'it is both possible and ethical to talk about what speech acts mean…without just putting words into the mouths of distant others', as a 'methodological imperative and not a political one' (ibid.:57)'. Indeed, my methodological approach informed the way I was looking and what I was looking for. It was self-reflective and critical, as well as performative and situated. Through this active engagement I found the artists' performed speech acts detailed below.

7.5.2 Types of Action //\\ Types of Freedom

7.5.2.1 Acts of Congruence & Assertions of Self-Determination

Practices of freedom surface in chapter four where the artists' acts of congruence were aligned to beliefs and desires underscoring *Always & Only* identities. I found these were motivating identifications based on past, present, and possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Lee & Oyserman, 2012) leading the artists to attend art school. I related the identities to believing in special talent from an early age, interconnected with *Special & Different* identifications, and influenced by mythologised identities of the born gifted (/solitary) artist-genius, whose talent is '*Always*' there, and who is granted the special position in society to '*Only*' make art. These myths foreground the potential freedoms in attending art school, which through structurelessness, provides the ideological and sometimes *actual* freedoms to '*Only*'. Creativity flourishes in these environments, where one is free to be fully immersed in flow states of art making (see Csíkszentmihályi, 1975; Krapp, 2002; Rheinberg, 2008). Acting congruently is interconnected with seeking these flow experiences as intrinsic motivations (and justifications) in attending art school (P2:33). This is exemplified through one artist's

comment I noted where they cherished 'the absolute freedom that…art school *could*, and…*does* perpetuate' (P11:1376-1381). As an intrinsic motivation, acting congruently is driven by internalised interest and self-intentionality (Krapp, 2002:415), where individuals act on interests that are congruent with values of their self-system (ibid.). As a practice of freedom, acting congruently was articulated through expressions of *Always & Only* identities which conveyed interests and values of certain freedoms they were motivated towards. It is also notable that although seeking to '*Only*' was considered a motivation, it is also a justification of an experience that has, to an extent, actually happened. Indeed, an overlapping experience of mine, noted in the opening lines of my introduction to this thesis, which I had unpacked through drawing as AMM (see figure 7, p.85), was that experiences of solely focussing on artistic practice, were not just felt to be offered, but are freedoms experienced through art schooling, even if fleetingly. However, this was not without some conflict, as discussed shortly.

Also in chapter four, assertions of self-determination connected to the artists' acting congruently were enacted through claims to being lucky. I positioned these as related to the acts of negation that come in chapter five, where referring to one's luck, goes towards negating the need for art schooling. As a practice of freedom the artists' self-determination indicated desired levels of responsibility and control emphasised through assertions of being lucky. This was viewed as having two-fold meaning. On the one hand signifying the artists had been chosen; an action that denied their agency, yet validated their talent. On the other hand, it signalled their rejection of deliberately seeking training; something that was in the artists' control. I found this increased their sense of agency and power in their relationships with the art school. The rejection of seeking being taught through postulations that they attended art school by accident, fluke, or luck, retains imprinted (and motivating) identifications of myths of the born talented, while asserting a level of self-determination as a significant practice of freedom.

7.5.2.2 Acts of Negation & Assertions of Self-Ledness

In chapter five, practices of freedom are carried out through acts of negation and interrelated assertions of self-ledness. They express rejections of pedagogisation

towards post-pedagogised and professional identities. Through them the artists' agency and power are framed alongside the art school, highlighting a complex navigation of institutionally constructed dis/empowerment. Indeed, 'institutional power is dependent on the social context and on intersubjective relations between persons' (Stahl, 2011:350). I position these practices of freedom as intentional acts made against the institutionalising capacity of the art school, as a form of resistance to these powers (Foucault, cited in Burr, 1995).

The overarching dis/empowering aspect of art schooling stems from structureless pedagogies. Both liberating and marginalising, these pedagogies are modelled on an enforcement of independence, instilling an ontological dimension to being an artist that subscribes to the mythologised '*Only*', as well as problematically directing artists towards a narrow and largely untenable career pathway of being '*Only*' an artist. Mythologised identities of '*Only*' are embedded through structureless pedagogies, however, they do not conspire freedom. Rather, structurelessness creates perhaps the most tension, conflict, and contradiction in the artists' professional identities and lives, playing to their (mythologised) desires and inscribing an anticipated professional direction influenced by a 'staged "freedom"' that is 'schooled by a pedagogical [and mythic] narrative' (Baldacchino, 2012:xix, cited in Daichendt, 2012). This counterproductively constricts freedoms during and after art schooling.

Although art schools may not claim to train students to be '*Only*' artists, it is implied, not just in the artists' comments, but through curricula expectations of independent study/creative practice. Programmes expect artist-students to work on creative practice for 40 hours a week, with a maximum of seven hours timetabled teaching/learning (see UAL, 2017b). This contrasts with studies that reveal the hours professional artists actually spend working on their creative practice (see TBR, 2018[70]), which is roughly half of that anticipated, and falsely staged, in art school. The offer of freedom to '*Only*' make for artist-students is misleadingly greater than that available to many professional artists. Furthermore, having only this option, 'functionally means no choice' (Ryan &

[70] TBR's (2018) Arts Council England supported study *Livelihoods of Visual Artists* surveyed artists in England, showing on average artists spent around 22 hours a week working on their practice, also echoed in other studies (see Throsby & Zednik, 2010). Location also influenced this with 'significantly fewer artists in London (18%)…able to work on their practice as much as they would hope' (TBR, 2018).

Deci, 2006:1577), diminishing feelings of autonomy unless one 'truly endorses that [singular] option' (ibid.), which the artists struggled to do. Instead, they found themselves unable to participate in the constructed freedom, due to needing more support, and suffering its exclusionary effects. The repercussions of the artifice of '*Only*' meant coming to terms with unmet hopes harboured through myths was extremely challenging afterwards.

I found practices of freedom stemming from these situations are embedded in negations and assertions of self-ledness intended to promote the notion of autonomy from having been subjected to art school's educational control. This protects the mythologised identity of the born talented artist, in reaction to its perceived erosion through being taught. Through this, *Osmotically Learning* surfaces as a practice of freedom over learning, controlling what, when, and how absorption occurs. Osmotic processes appear external to official curricula and governed by the artist-students. However, though this kind of 'hidden' curricula poses problems around evading assessment (Houghton, 2008), art schools have absorbed these activities into HAE policy as part of acknowledged forms of 'personalised curriculum for each student' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:7). Pedagogy developers deliberately create environments for its occurrence (ibid.), highlighting the notion that 'life [and artist-student's freedom] is always – to a greater or lesser extent – scripted' (Whelan & Ryan, 2018:65). The situation conjures Foucault's descriptions of Bentham's Panopticon and its disciplinary powers (1975) referred to in chapter three. The artists self-monitor, believing they are in control, while being surveilled and coerced to enact 'freedom' all the while (see Burr, 1995:48). Nevertheless, through these interrelations of power and agency, I found the artists did experience certain powers through *Osmotically Learning* over what, when, and how absorption occurred, controlling when to become-osmotic as practices of freedom.

These acts intentionally balance institutional and organisational powers of legitimation, and, though not necessarily leading to absolute 'freedom', in the sense of being free to '*Only*' work on creative practice full time, they locate the artists' agentic capacities in greater equivalence with the structural powers of the institution as a matter of care for themselves and others. Even if contrived through higher arts educational policy, these practices of freedom hold on to and let go of pedagogised and mythologised

identifications, protecting their idealised status of remaining free from having been trained and reifying a sense of their agency and freedom alongside the art school's structure and control.

7.5.2.3 Acts of De/re-mythification & Assertions of Self-Regulation

In chapter six, practices of freedom are indicated through acts of de/re-mythification, which inform identifications, delivered through self-regulatory activities. Having encountered an education where the pedagogical impetus is preparation for a career centred on '*Only*', post art school the artists re-approach this ideology in line with experiences of new realities (outside the 'bubble'). Afterwards, the artists' efforts centre on de-pedagogising and re-narrating their identities, through practices of freedom that inculcate post-pedagogised and professional identities. Recoveries entail acts instituted as modes of undoing and recalibrating magnitudes of emotional tensions resulting from art schooling. Adaptation and acceptance as practices of freedom are evident in the artists' decisive modifications to medium, and in their tolerances/embracement of subemployment, as acts taken to gain control over their creative practice.

The artists' aims around acquiring degrees of artistic autonomy post art school are centralised in chapter six. This highlights the influence of mythologised artist figures that are idealised as occupying autonomous positions, which the artists' appear repeatedly motivated towards. The boundaries of what autonomy might encompass is conveyed through the practices of freedom to this end. The term 'radical autonomy' is used elsewhere, centralising radicality in artists' autonomous subjectivities (see Banks, 2010). However, I consider the artists' practices of freedom to convey something more like profound-reified-autonomies. This term signals the artists' re-narrations and de/re-mythifications as self-regulated acts that anticipate boundaried and relative autonomies as practices of freedom. By this definition, I also deliberately renounce notions of 'radical/radicality' that have become fetishised (Rodney, 2019), and which co-opt mythic ideologies of rebelliousness that the artists' avoided. 'Profound' and 'reified' (re)aligns artistic autonomy with the artists' experiences of this particular sense of limited freedom; in being as free as possible from mythologised and institutionalised tropes. The definition reflects autonomy that is real to them and their professional practices. They are boundaried, relative freedoms, in a Ricœurian (1950) sense 'finite

freedoms'. They represent their compromise and struggles, and the 'tension between them and ultimately to consent to their embodied lives and the world as something they do not fully create' (Pellauer & Dauenhauer, 2016), much like the myths they are held in, hold onto, let go of, and are let go from.

In chapter six, the search for absolute freedom/autonomy is also considered a matter of futility (Atkinson, 2002) because creative practice (and indeed, freedom (Whelan & Ryan, 2018)) is always dependent, always contingent and conditional on interdependent circumstances, prohibiting the singularity assumed necessary for autonomy. But, this doesn't stop self-determination, self-regulation, self-ledness, re-narration, and de/re-mythification from mattering deeply to these artists, who create autonomies of social, practical, and personal significance. As a system of self-care, this reflects the thinking that, 'autonomy, when accurately defined, is essential to the full functioning and mental health of individuals and optimal functioning of organizations and cultures' (Ryan & Deci, 2006:1559). My positioning of artists performing and actioning profound-reified-autonomies is intended to convey such a definition, in navigating identities and easing entangled emotional tensions stemming from art schooling.

7.5.3 Pluralities of Freedom

The practices of freedom discussed above rely upon plurality. Though partially representing individual states, they also highlight the artists' ongoing struggles for types of autonomy and authority situated in demands for recognition of their collective conditions. The relative autonomies therein, are a call for de/re-mythified more faithfully aligned identities. Achievement of this necessitates the artists' self-regulated (re)narrations of who and how they were, are, and wish to be held and let go in the world(s) they inhabit, which, crucially, occurs through plurality with others.

I have fractured and pieced back together the artists' speech acts as polyvocal declarations. This approach pluralises these acts, sufficiently raising actions to freedom, revealing individual acts as collective practices of freedom that underscore their professional identities. This is bolstered by the artists' assertions, noted throughout this study, of being engaged in groups and communities of practice, and wishing for better conditions for *all* artists. This also pluralises individual acts towards

freedom, connecting the singular to many, conveying meaning through these pluralities. This deliberate framing of freedom moves away from the 'pervasive emphasis on freedom as embodied in individuals, to freedom that emerges through concerted action' (Whelan & Ryan, 2018:47), invoking Arendt's notion that individuals cannot convey freedom by themselves (D'Entrèves, 2019).

The practices of freedom are unified and endorsed through the interwoven belief in *Always & Only* being an artist, and consolidated through performances of congruence to this end. Performing congruence, while navigating and absorbing certain obstacles, such as subemployment, is folded into their endeavours. Navigating freedoms and their embedded art schooled tensions informs the artists' professional practice, as the conscious escaping and embracing of the commands and demands of mythologised identities. These are granted through processes of plural action through reflective endorsement (autonoetic consciousness), and validated by being embedded in their artistic practice. Profound-reified-autonomy can be attained, even if only momentarily. The artists' practices of freedom are ongoing, continuously changing forms of boundaried freedoms, which continue to morph over time as part of ongoing professional practices and identifications.

During our conversations, the artists consistently attempted to detach themselves from the art schools' dominant authority and power, unstitching elements from their biographies, unpicking it through practices of freedom. Yet, it remains interwoven throughout its fabric, featuring as key threads holding important aspects together, entangled in the material of their lives, careers, and identities. Art school affords artists the 'freedom' to be '*Only*' an artist, even if briefly. While a highly motivating and revered part of the art school experience, it is also complex and far from always positively or universally experienced, causing significant difficulties during art school and afterwards. The artists' freedoms, in relation to their art school experiences, are slippery, fleeting, and relative, as well as incessant and always there; on offer and encouraged, yet also constrained through the powers of the art school, and continuing into professional lives. I foreground the art school as a site for professional identity work in the final section of this chapter next, discussing specific pedagogical devices towards these ends, and the artists' formations of professional identities.

7.6
Professionalisation

CO-NEGOTIATED IDENTITIES & PRACTICES

Until now, I have not fully situated the artists' relationship with their professional status, and many questions have arisen through this study around being and becoming professional, as well as negotiating and co-creating professional practices through art school pedagogies. In this section, I consider questions that focus on the artists' experiences of art schooling and professionalisation, and ask, what do art schooled professional identities entail? What influence do art school pedagogies, such as structurelessness and the C/crit, have on their de/reconstruction, and in relation to certain freedoms and legitimation? What is negotiable, co-created and where are the boundaries, and what does 'being chosen' to attend a revered art school mean? How does the inside/outside dichotomy, with its artificial and mythologised freedoms, influence professionalisation? And, what are the relationships between myths perpetuated through art schooling, de/re-mythification, and professional identifications and practices? In the following discussion I untangle and outline the artists' professional identifications shaped through art schooling.

7.6.1 Professional Parameters

In other studies, artists' professional identifications occupy a central position in their lives (see Bain, 2005; Wesner, 2018). However, in this study, I found professional identities operate as one identity among a range of identifications, navigated before, during, and after art schooling, overlapping and entangled with others. They were expressed as not always accessible (P3:3766-3828 & P3:3863-3966), less stable, and more recently acknowledged identifications.

Cultural and professional identity theories (Becker, 1963, 1982; Nicolini & Roe, 2014) emphasise aspiring professionals' necessary identity work, particularly 'the need for a novice creative to take up a new identity' (Littleton & Miell 2004, in Taylor & Littleton, 2012:25). However, embedded in this is an underlying assumption that artists/artist-students are *aspiring* professionals, which my findings are inconsistent with. Instead, I found that not all artists who go to art school aspire to be, or wish to be classified as, *professional* artists. Notably, none of the artists in this study specifically

self-identified as a *professional* artist. They may have sought approval, or professional 'status' indicated in chapter four as a motivation, but this was more to validate born-talented mythic ideals than embodying it as an identification. One artist directly expressed they had 'wanted…to be professionalised' (P4:5524-5529) through art schooling, however, this now appears as a potentiated identification, or (im)possible self (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman et al. 2017). Indeed, other than when seeking to resituate impeding myths (P12:5336)[71], the artists disassociated with notions of professional, professionalisation, or professionalism, instead recoiling from using that terminology to describe themselves. This was most notable in reactions to explicit professional development discussed in chapter five, perhaps representing a pressure Teather (1990, cited in Paquette, 2012:10) suggests is exerted on the art profession that maintains its instability. The artist who did not mind if art featured as a hobby, or a profession in their life, but was content to have something to 'chip away at' (P3:4035), exemplifies this. This also highlights that '*Always*' (or 'still', as discussed in chapter six) making contributes significantly to identifying as an artist, as a motivation to continue, rather than an aspiration to be, or be considered, a *professional*.

Conversely, the artists also described working in ways that reveal professional conduct. They displayed aspirations relating to practices that were not purely object/attainment centred, and not easily ticked off a 'professional' membership criteria checklist (see AUE, 2020), but signal the ambiguity and ongoing nature of artists' professional identity development. For example; continuing to centralise making and exhibiting their art; juggling subemployment with carrying out residencies; highlighting professional conduct through foregrounding validating interactions with other professionals; teaching art and acknowledging its part in developing ongoing practice; undertaking further study; finding and creating communities; and, seeking to monetise practice and/or adapt it to changing circumstances. All of these activities imply professional capacity, interest, and priorities (see Daichendt, 2010; Atkinson, 2011; Paquette, 2012; Nicolini & Roe, 2014). However, the artists still clearly distinguished between being an artist and being a professional, as highlighted in chapter four's

[71] In chapter six, P12 suggests, 'I don't know what other way there is…but…I think you should think of yourself as a professional' (P12:5336-5345) as a refusal of the artist mystique to be taken seriously, rather than specifically identifying as professional.

discussion where none of the artists said they attended art school because they believed it would make them into an artist; *that*, they already believed.

The underlying assertion here is a distinction between their '*Always*' believed artistic identities, that are portrayed as consistent (though not always accessible), and the kind of artist felt to be potentiated through having been art schooled under professional pedagogies. These pedagogies are partially rejected in the formation of post-pedagogised and professional identities that embody these relativised ideologies and the profound-reified-autonomies discussed before. The artists separate their 'artist identities' (that incorporate various identities), from their 'professional identities' (which exist among the others). The separation demonstrates they see these as operating differently, and highlights the importance of 'subjective self-evaluation of being an artist' (Frey & Pommerehne, 1989:147), noted in chapter two. An evaluation characterised by the artist referred to above who asserted that making art 'is something that I can always do' (P3:3335), regardless of whether or not it was acknowledged more widely as 'professional'. This foregrounds the unwavering belief in '*Always*', and that being an artist is not necessarily believed or conveyed by artists as a 'professional' identification, but is deeply attached to attitudes, values, and beliefs, that are flexible and contextual negotiations of past, present, and future identifications. Though the distinction between amateur, hobbyist, and professional was acknowledged, they sought to remain free from either categorisation, because for them it was negligible compared to still making.

I question whether avoiding categorisation is perhaps influenced by myth and the 'yearnings for a return to the uncorrupted sources of creativity itself' (Cubbs, 1994:84) that the image of the non-art-schooled artist is founded on (ibid.). It may also indicate inherited ideas around art schooling securing professional membership[72], which may not have happened for these artists. It could also be related to situating one's 'creative liberation' (Hamilton, 2013:186) associated with amateurism. Or perhaps it represents attempts to avoid being subsumed into the wider system, delegitimating acceptance of its overall institutional powers (Stahl, 2011) attached to practices of freedom. Indeed,

[72] This is related to the UK (Western) higher education system, whereas automatic professional membership stemming from education is discussed elsewhere as being a conditional aspect of graduating, in the former Eastern bloc for example (see Wesner, 2018).

the influence of the wider institutions in which art schools are responsive is certainly significant, making 'being chosen' a preeminent factor in identity negotiations and transformations occurring through art schooling, as discussed next.

7.6.2 Being Chosen: Institutional Validation & Collective Acceptance

Being Lucky, discussed in chapter four, though a double assertion, ceded the importance of being chosen, that, if attending art school was lucky, it conveyed the art school could be held responsible for choosing them. Though a motivation, I found the validating effects of being chosen are experienced most prominently after art schooling. For example, through meeting validators (curators and/or other alumni), the artists proved linguistic aptitude, or drew on the art school's reputational value as a form of collective currency, gaining approval in professional settings by persons of professional relevance. These incidents represent 'significant social events' (Breakwell, 1986:22) deemed necessary in identity development, characterising being taken seriously that underscores artists' professional identification (Bain, 2005:33). It outlines significant ongoing negotiators (Paquette, 2012) in the co-creation of artists' professional identities. Being chosen acts as validation of special talent, and furthermore, folds and upholds mythologised ideas of the 'born talented' into artists' stories and professional identities. These myths are also upheld by institutions in order to validate these identities. Indeed, art school selection processes which approve mythologised talent symbolise 'collective identification and a means of demarcating the contours of group membership' (Bain, 2005:42) necessary for professional inclusion.

The institutional powers of the art school and the affiliated art machine underscore this discussion, highlighting the artists' acceptances of legitimation as granting institutional authority. In the field of New Institutionalism, noted in chapter two, institutions are considered 'constellations of established practices guided by enduring, formalized, rational beliefs that transcend particular organizations and situations' (Lammers & Barbour, 2006, cited in Lammers & Garcia, 2017:195). They represent the 'taken-for-granted beliefs, rules, and norms, [that] shape the creation and spreading of organizational forms, design features, and practices' (Berthod, 2017:1). Individual organisations, such as art schools, are considered 'local instantiations of wider institutions' (ibid.), and 'the spreading of institutions' is considered 'a political process that involves many organizations with some interest in the issue at stake' (ibid.:3). The

wider art machine has a vested interest in the machinations of the art school and vice versa for the entire institution of art, that contains the art market, and art world at large, to stay afloat. Though art schools might compete with each other, they are also allied, because choosing the right people to be initiated into this is paramount. Being chosen thus translates as validation from the art world. I found the artists were aware of these selection agendas, discussing being chosen on their personality over portfolio (P10:808), or for bringing a certain attitude (P9:970) to perform correctly (P8:620). This awareness raises Bourdieu's concept of habitus, which signifies 'knowing one's own place but also a 'sense of place of others'' (Bourdieu, 1990, cited in Grenfell & Hardy, 2007:29). The artists were cognisant their personalities fitted a profile the art schools wanted. Some admitted that was why they were drawn to particular schools (P6:995), highlighting a desire for and acceptance of this form of validation.

To complicate things, however, art schools exist as organisations straddling more than one institution, both 'art' and 'education'. Though, as previously discussed, art and education are considered incompatible by some (Baldacchino, 2015:62), art schools are effectively subordinate to the rules of both. Yet, institutions are not fixed entities, but are conceived as bundles of 'beliefs, rules, roles, and symbolic elements' (Berthod, 2017:2). This makes the rules of group membership, validation, and authority even more complex and indeterminate. While institutional codes of conduct are informal yet formalised by dominant political economic landscapes, they are also understood to be a matter of negotiation. Institutionalisation, and its power, is understood to be carried through 'social processes, obligations, or actualities [that] come to take on a rule-like status in social thought and action' (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, cited in Lammers & Garcia, 2017:199). This is 'driven as much by external forces as functional requirements or *internal* organizational rationality' (ibid. emphasis added). I emphasise *internal* to signal the powers artists' might have in collapsing the hierarchical effects of the inside/outside dichotomy, because professional identities can be collectively negotiated with the institution.

Through a mix of collective action (Paquette, 2012), the institution and the people in it, work together nurturing each's powers to validate professional identities. Where before, the inside/outside dichotomy subordinated the art school to the art machine,

occurrences like those with the curator, alumni meet ups, enacting common currency, and, de/re-mythification, highlight collective professional identity formation. These are co-created by individuals and institutions, shifting power dynamics towards greater equivalence with each other. This equivalencing is recognised in acknowledgements of institution's self-fulfilling powers, specifically, 'the power to create, sustain, change or abolish the institution and its rules' (Stahl, 2011:352), and that institutional power rests on '(collectively) accepted status functions' that work by 'giving people a reason to obey the legitimate demands of those who have the relevant powers' (ibid.:351). The reasons, for these artists, are in group membership, feeling included, and assimilating (to a conditional degree) with the institution that legitimates them, all as negotiations of professional identity formation (Evetts, 2012; Paquette, 2012). Next, I consider how these institutional power dynamics are negotiated through art schooling.

7.6.3 Professionalising Pedagogies: Co-Creation & the Boundaries of Negotiation

Institutional validation is shown above to be actualised through co-creation and collective acceptance. Art school pedagogies also rely on this in professional identity formation and approval. Both structurelessness and the C/crit have been discussed in this study, and elsewhere (Orr & Shreeve, 2018; Crippa, 2014, 2015), as intentional pedagogical modes of initiating professional practices and fostering professional identity formation. The former through compulsory independent study intended to replicate professional artistic practice (see P1:1119-1259), and the latter, through co-created status, awarded through 'The Group' (Day, 2012), eventually leading to group membership and recognition/validation as an artist (Crippa, 2015:135). Although these pedagogies surfaced particular challenges, they also enabled certain negotiations of professional identities. I foreground these negotiations here through the artists' relationships with transformation, and intersecting roles of agency, power, and freedom as implicit aspects of their navigations.

7.6.3.1 Transformation

Transformation has a notable history in education, where learning inspires 'patterns of adaptation and transformation' (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996: 376). In particular, HAE is considered 'a journey that involves identity transformation' (Orr & Shreeve, 2018:3), and in HAE policy, art pedagogies are viewed as 'transformative education' (see UAL, 2015). This also relates to arts' historical, and mythologised, emancipatory role (see

Kant (1987[1790]); Baldacchino, 2015). Pursuing art school approval, discussed in chapter four as a motivation (/justification) related to developing from amateur to professional, is interconnected with this. It implies a sense of openness on behalf of the artists to be transformed, or of feeling enabled to fold having been transformed through art schooling into their stories. The transformations the artists discussed as stemming from art schooling (see P9:1345&3722; P4:4835; P1:2436) could dismantle the constancy of '*Always*' identities. Yet, they do not. Instead they are brought into the '*Always*' theme. The seamless merging of learnt and intuitive knowledge in a statement made by one artist exemplifies this. They stated,

> I still reflect sometimes on some of the things that I was taught when I was there… There's all the sort of rigour, all of the understanding about what you're doing, why you're doing it…and knowing intuitively what's a good thing to do and bad…they've remained and they won't change, they won't shift…those things don't go away.
>
> (P4:4835-4854)

Experiencing transformation through art schooling occupies a position of permanence for these artists, translated into a valuable and continuous currency (P9:3967). This is institutionally legitimated and legitimating, affording ongoing bargaining powers in mediations of professional group membership which underscore ongoing professional identity negotiations (see Evetts, 2012; Nicolini & Roe, 2014). Disclosures of these transformations perhaps signify lowered resistance to professional(ising) bodies (of which the art school is considered) that have previously been distrusted for their restrictiveness (see Brown & Hackett, 1991). Alternatively, through their imbrication into '*Always*' themes, they also demonstrate that these artists' continuous professional identifications necessitate consistent drawing on currencies. The artists position themselves as art schooled artists, legitimising professional selves through institutional validation, substantiating this through group settings. The art school's legacy for these artists is founded in transformation, the value of which is not necessarily accumulative (Vishmidt, 2011), nor wholly speculative (Diederichsen, 2008), but of continuously shifting worth in negotiations of their fluctuating professional identities. Indeed, ideas that, 'we increasingly live in a world of negotiated identities where we must continually construct and revise visions of self' (Scanlon, 2012, cited in Nicolini & Roe, 2014:70), and that 'being a professional requires nurturing a repertoire of possible individual

identities that need to be not only consciously entertained and nurtured but also carefully and skilfully managed' (Nicolini & Roe, 2014:70) is centralised and furthered here. For these artists, their negotiations necessarily embed a constant presence of the art school through asserting having been transformed.

7.6.3.2 Navigations of Agency & Freedom

Transformation is not experienced as pure emancipation however, but is actively balanced and constrained through the artists' attempts to equalise art school's powers with their agency. To understand this in negotiations of professional identities, I recall Oyserman et al.'s (2017:140) notion (cited in chapter four), that 'identities have value and people regulate themselves in light of their identities', and additionally that 'identity accessibility and content are flexibly attuned to contextual constraints and affordances' (ibid.), meaning navigations of varying powers are necessarily played out. The artists expressed this through their assertions of agentic capacity around ASA (Art School Absorptions), as well as in their rebuttals of professional development, and their taking ownership of ways of learning through becoming-osmotic discussed in chapter five. What is absorbed, or not, and the ways this is embedded into transformations occurring through art schooling, reflects what the artists had agency over. This creates the boundaries of what is incorporated into professional identity formations. What the artists had agency over in art schooling is enmeshed with the powers within institutional prescriptions and legitimations, individual/collective desires, mythologised portrayals, and what was valued.

What is valued has emotional significance and emotion is embedded in identity and its formation (see Stets, 2005; Bandura, 2008; Harlé et al. 2013) and myth too, by dint of myth's entwinement with identification. Emotions are deeply affected by the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions experienced through art schooling, influencing absorptions and potential agency therein. In freedom and professionalisation, the influence of emotions is less explicit, but can be understood by referring again to Foucault (1978-1979) to see that sensitive, personal, and relatable elements of freedom and professionalisation have been politicised and individualised, making them subordinate to the institutional powers that govern them, in this case the art school, the wider art institution, and arts, cultural, and educational policy. Foucault (cited in, Gutting &

Oksala, 2019) considers the individualisation of power and knowledge of a person's life relates to the biopolitical and neoliberal turns. These developed 'power technologies oriented towards individuals in an attempt to govern their conduct in a continuous and permanent way' resulting in 'the intervention of the state in the everyday life of individuals for example, their diet, mental health, and sexual practices' (ibid.). This relates to the artists' ability/inability to name oneself, perform as, and practice as (professional) artists during art school and beyond. It is the individualisation of freedoms and professionalisation, that means they can be controlled and/or constrained. This manifests through the artists' experiences of single choice professional pedagogies offered through art schooling, through which they had little choice over their individual freedoms and professionalisation; the choice they had at art school, of prescribed independence, was effectively no choice. Plus, embedded in structurelessness was that they were responsible for everything. Placing the onus on artist-students at art school deeply effects their relationship to their work afterwards and underlies their professionalisation. It is also, as noted earlier, related to individualising labour as a requirement of workers in the CCIs (see McRobbie, 2016:67) that is justified through policy which requires art school pedagogies to deliver this.

As well, artist-students learn/are taught through critical pedagogies (Kenning, 2019) meaning rejection of institutionally prescribed professional development is also somewhat anticipated (Garoian, 1999). While this goes against 'complying with institutionalized prescriptions' as 'a means for gaining legitimacy' (Berthod, 2017:1), it is exemplified in the artists' lack of value placed on recalling[73], acknowledging, or accepting professional development experienced at art school, as well as their assertions of agency in the refusals of legitimisation and authority constituting acts of negation. Certainly, what is anticipated by art schools to be absorbed, such as technical skilling or becoming more employable, are not, perhaps due to incongruence with (in the moment) identities (Oyserman et al. 2017). Conversely, what is valued, such as perspectival shifts and criticality are absorbed, and power over learning through becoming-osmotic is enacted through self-ledness and embedded in professional

[73] Conway and Loveday (2015) suggest that based on values we choose what memories to instigate when narrating our stories that generate 'explanatory beliefs about one's life' (ibid.:580).

identifications. Though non-compliance might be expected under critical pedagogies, professional development takes shape at the boundaries of what is valued, and reflects the artists' agency over self-definition of their professional identities. This self-definition, seen as key for artists (Deuze & Lewis, 2013), is led by the artists' deeply emotional experiences and negotiated through reified freedoms that underscore their professional identifications.

7.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, through analysis and contextualisation of my findings from chapters four, five, and six, I have presented five core categories: *Tensions, Conflicts & Contradictions*, *Identity*, *Myth*, *Freedom*, and *Professionalisation*. In analysing these, I reveal the artists' experiences, views, and perspectives of art schooling, as well as what the art school means to them, and its ongoing significance in their careers and continuums. I outline the multiple identifications that have been shaped through art schooling and the tensions therein, which are motivating yet compromising, available and sometimes elusive, but constantly evolving and negotiable. I show artists are the progenitors of necessary de/re-mythification, essential to their recovery|continuum and processes of professional identity negotiations, retaining characterisations they deemed effective, and dismantling those they considered no longer relevant. I have detailed the artists' specific practices of freedom in response to explicit and implicit art school pedagogies, and demonstrated they are aimed towards particular and relative profound-reified-autonomies. I have also highlighted artists' professional identities are co-negotiated through certain art school pedagogies and legitimation. These identities are boundaried by folding institutionally validated currency and transformation into their stories, and drawn upon in social situations. They are reified in accordance with the artists' agentic capacities alongside institutional powers, towards certain freedoms. However, underlying all of this are the deep emotionally seated tensions, conflicts, and contradictions that art schooling creates in and through these.

The relationship between art schooled identities, myths, freedoms, and professionalisation is navigated through the tensions, conflicts and contradictions art school has created, which sits between them all. Tensions, conflicts and contradictions are how these art schooled artists' identities are negotiated, and emotions are the

connective tissues interwoven through these; because experiencing *is* emotional. The artists' difficult, tense, disappointing, and challenging relationship with their art schooling which continues to affect their careers, lives, and practices afterwards, is notable because of this. We remember things that are emotionally difficult (Kensinger & Kark, 2018), which is why these artists' stories are framed around these themes. While identity and myth are already emotionally embedded concepts, freedom and professionalisation have become so through their individualisation. Emotion thus operates on an individual level, and the art schooled tensions, conflicts, and contradictions which affect these emotions, deeply influence the artists' identity formations in relation to myth, freedom, and professionalisation as a result. With the unsettling of emotions through the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions, comes power-resistance struggles seen throughout this thesis, and with a single-choice model of participation in enforced independence (structurelessness), comes further opposition and onus on the artists to take all of the responsibility. This embeds the individualisation that CCI policy (and neoliberalism) wants (McRobbie, 2016:67), and continues to affect the artists' identities, practices, and careers long after art school.

In the findings chapters I outline the ways in which artists approach some of the consequences related to this, through adaptations and acceptances, as well as denunciations and refusals via de/re-mythification, and through practices of freedom enacting self-regulation, self-determination, and self-ledness. These strategies define as well as depend upon the range of multiple, available, and possible identifications I frame in this chapter, and the artists' drawing upon them to oscillate between and through different contradictory situations. I suggest these intentionally, and sometimes less consciously, balance and work through tensions as a form of hidden, yet affective immaterial labour that underscores ongoing identity work necessary in the artists' continuums in shaping professional practices. As well, this particular identity work establishes the basis of these art schooled artists' professional identities. For the artists, being an art schooled artist presents an ontological dimension of tension, conflict, and contradiction, necessitating a continuing practice of balancing and equivalencing, with conscious processes of overcoming and protecting, towards possible and maintainable art practices and identities.

Chapter 8
8. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1
Summary

In this study I present knowledge and understanding of artists' encounters of art schooling through an original approach to GTM, blending its procedures with arts-based/informed methods, to answer my central research question of; What are artists' experiences and views of their undergraduate fine art education and encounters of professional development in London art schools? My main enquiries were centred on; Why do people/artists attend art school? What do they take from it? What, if at all, are their experiences of professional development? And, what is it like for them afterwards? In answering these central enquiries my main aims were to listen to artists' experiences and views of their fine art education, to foreground their voices and words, generating wider understanding of these experiences, to contribute to awareness and knowledge in this area of research, and to develop this understanding through an interpretive methodological approach with arts-based/informed methods aligned to my arts practice.

I have answered these enquiries and met these aims through developing a study in which I could listen deeply to artists and analyse what they said, presenting my findings through chapters four, five, and six respectively on artists' *Motivation* (/justification) for attending art school, their *Reaction* to what their fine art education was like, and the ways their *Recovery|Continuum* have taken shape since leaving. The main themes that run through the findings chapters are developed in chapter seven, and sit across four core categories of *Artists' Identities*, *Myths*, *Freedoms*, and *Professionalisation*, which are held together by a fifth, *Tension, Conflict, & Contradiction*, which positions art schooling as causing lasting emotional tensions, conflicts, and contradictions in these art schooled artists' lives. This is shown to have an ongoing impact, influencing how, if, and when the artists in this study felt able to continue to make art, what capacity this could take, their confidence in doing so, and their negotiations of post-pedagogised and professional identities. To reach these findings, I foregrounded artists' voices, views, and perspectives of this significant time in their development, meeting a central objective of mine from the outset. Through this their vital role in contributing to

understanding of the issues that affect them, and their position as progenitors of policies that influence their lives is highlighted. These findings were made possible through my extending of Grounded Theory Methodology's analytic coding and memoing processes to include arts-based/informed methods. Through a performative, embodied approach, I expanded the rigorous fracturing, interpreting, and piecing back together of what the artists said, to include a reflexive interweaving of my overlapping experiences as an artist researching this topic adding value to the construing of critical and sensitively detailed meaning, that a straightforward content analysis could not. In this chapter I recap the key findings from each chapter, detailing the answers to my initial research question, how I have met my research aims, and my approach and findings' significance to wider research, also providing a summary of the study's original contribution. After, I position the implications of this research on cultural and educational policy and fine art pedagogy development, raising questions for art schools, pedagogy/curriculum designers, and policymakers. Finally, I reflect on the limits of this study and make suggestions for further investigations. I begin by summarising the study's overall distinctiveness from research in the field, and follow with a review of each chapter's findings and contributions to knowledge and understanding.

8.2

Contributing to Understanding

APPROACH | FINDINGS | CONTRIBUTION | IMPLICATIONS

This study differs from others that centralise the art school and visual artists' education in the UK, in its focus on artists' voices, on professional development in fine art courses in London art schools between 1986 and 2016, and in its approach that uses arts-based/informed methods with those of GTM. Other research in this field, discussed throughout the thesis, focus on art school's particular pedagogical formats and influence (Crippa, 2014; Garoian, 2015; Baldacchino, 2015; Houghton, 2016; jagodzinski, 2018; Orr & Shreeve, 2018; Newall, 2019), the prominence of London art schools from the perspective of educators and/or historians (Llewellyn, 2015), or on different timeframes to mine (Massouras, 2012). Elsewhere, studies consider undergraduate artist personas (Piazza, 2017), and art education and identity (Atkinson, 2002, 2011), which though also surface in this study, I specifically consider these through experiences of professional pedagogies in London art schools. As well, there is a growing body of valuable research that centralise artists' voices (Taylor & Littleton,

2012; Shreeve & Batchelor 2012; Louden, 2013, 2017; Gerber, 2017; Wesner, 2018), as I do in my research. However, none focus specifically on fine art education or experiences of professional pedagogies, nor the timeframe or location. Being an artist carrying out this study also distinguishes it from others. It was my overlapping experiences and wanting to work materially that stimulated my performative reflexive approach and development of arts-based/informed methods with Grounded Theory Methodology methods, through which I drew on my art practice to offer emic insights that directly address the area of study. I developed these methods to conceptualise through my insider status and draw out sensitive and critical understanding of the artists' performed actions, assertions, and selves that underscore my findings.

The findings, which I review shortly, add this distinct perspective in the field of visual artists' personal and professional development through art schooling, that crucially, is developed from artists' views and experiences of this. The research advances knowledge and understanding of higher art education, the effects of art schooling on artist-graduate's careers, and the specific effects of professional pedagogies, as well as how meaning can be constructed through arts-based/informed methods with social scientific approaches, furthering critical qualitative research methodologies. In this section, I recap key findings and knowledge developed through each chapter, summarising contributions and highlighting their relationships to relevant policy and/or pedagogy/curriculum development, towards a summary of the original contribution of my research findings and policy implications. I begin with a review of the methodology, outlining the distinctive insights gained through the arts-based/informed methods I used and their value to the thesis.

8.2.1 Methodology

In chapter three, *Methodology: The Coding Cave and the Performative Fishbowl*, I detail and review my approach to this study, which extends Grounded Theory Methodology with arts-based/informed methods, to include making meaning through drawing, making, speaking, filming, editing, and performing, which I term *Analytic Memoing & Materialising* (AMM). I foregrounded GTM's suitability for carrying out this research as being aligned to my wanting to conduct an explorative study, fitting my social constructivist approach to knowing and understanding, my relative ontology,

subjective epistemology, and interpretive research paradigm. As a flexible methodology (Pace, 2012) with no 'right or wrong approaches' (Birks & Mills, 2015:9) using GTM permitted my extending of the analytic coding and memoing methods, to include *materialising* through performative, reflexive meaning making using arts practices. GTM has been highly suitable for me to use as an artist and researcher coming from a position of having overlapping experiences with the participating artists yet also coming to this research through an institution outside of the art school.

Indeed, my flexing of GTM to include arts-based/informed methods helped me exploit meaning from this position. My approach heightened my conceptualising by embedding a deeper sensitivity to the data through a multilevel interpersonal process between emic and etic positions, which a regular transcript analysis would not have permitted. Dealing with my overlapping memories that my emic status garnered through drawing as AMM explicitly raised a high level of reflexivity adding value to the findings. Through these processes I became sensitised to my partialities through deliberate self-confrontation, which allowed me to see more clearly what was happening for the artists in the data by distinguishing my thinking from preconceptions. A straightforward analysis would not have permitted the development of this perspective in such detail or with such sensitivity to the data. The drawing process I developed deliberately facilitated my locating and conceptualising of ideas. In particular, I sensitised myself to the artists experiences of skilling, teasing out understanding of their expectations and capacities around (not/)talking about artworks, and coming to know the difficulties they experienced around explicit professional development (discussed in chapter five). As well, I developed a critical sense of and was able to foreground the fleetingness of freedoms afforded by art school's structurelessness (chapters five, six, and seven) through the drawing as AMM.

My making of specific apparatus meant, not only did I create a particular way of learning from the data that deliberately necessitated *doing*, which a computer-based or less embodied method could not facilitate, but I fostered a material closeness that consciously embedded diffractivity, not merely reflecting, but surfacing differences as well as sameness (Barad, 2007; Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017). This was key in terms of raising and utilising my sensitivities embedded in my emic position and developing my

conceptualising of the categories I present through this study overall as a result. It permitted a specific handle on the material that a routine transcript analysis would not. Through this I permitted myself to take control of the data and intentionally inscribed a power dynamic that I needed in order to navigate the particular challenges and affordances of my emically situated researcher position (see Olive, 2014). This added value to the study in terms of my developing deeper responsiveness through the immersive intra-actions and material closeness the apparatus I designed facilitated, influencing how I was *doing* searching, what I was finding, and what to include in this thesis.

My performing *doing* research to actual and potential audiences, my speaking aloud (and singing) that I orchestrated through my chosen location, making of apparatus, and instigating filming, all heightened abductive thinking (Locke, 2007). Through it I generated more profuse memos than the typed sort, and embodied empathy that was crucial to my being able to sensitively handle the unrestrained emotional accounts I was analysing. This influenced and is reflected in my inclusion of deeply emotive descriptions and recollections, influencing the timbre of the thesis, especially in chapter six where disappointments and nostalgia are foregrounded. Performativity added particular value to the findings, extending my rigorous, recursive, and self-reflective abstracting of ideas, focussing my ability to see the connections through my physical construction of categories that were beyond the capabilities of a screen-based or less situated analysis. This facilitated my search across multiple reams of data simultaneously, enabling my *doing* of finding, through reading, moving, thinking, lifting, sorting, and assembling my ideas behind key categories, including; *Always & Only* (introduced in chapter four), *Negation of the Art School* (chapter five), and the core category of *Freedom* that underscores many central ideas throughout the thesis. Later, this *doing* aided my constructing of a networked web of associations, again an apparatus that I consciously created to instil control. This particular physical intra-action supported a deep conceptualisation through the materials, whereby I physically positioned interrelations, separations, and made groups of categories, raising interconnections between them, including; *Validation* and *London/Reputation*, *Luck* and *Negation* (discussed in chapter four), and *Realities* and *Different Now/Different Today* (chapter six), and also isolating *Adaptability & Adaptation Period* (chapter six),

Who Defines the Artist?, and *Separation Devices* (chapter seven). Significantly, GTM requires researchers to look for processes and actions (Charmaz, 2012:5) to discern what is 'going on' (Birks & Mills, 2015). Notably, through my performative approach, I recognised the performances in the artists' speech, and the actions embedded in their descriptions of their experiences of art school that underscore the concepts I present. This approach directly addressed the artists' assertions and the area of study, and using myself to witness and analyse the participating artists through, meant the findings were only possible through this instead of a different or more conventional approach to research of this kind.

Applying GTM with arts-based/informed methods has added particular value to this study. Through it, I have facilitated different forms of analytic listening, conceptualising, sensitivity, and reflexivity, which sharpened and focussed my ability to see what was 'going on' in the data, make meaning from it, and fold this into the thesis I present here. I facilitated a way for myself to come in and out of my emic and etic positions, enriching the analysis by being able to see what the participants were saying most clearly through these lenses, and convey this in a way that was distinct from my own memories and experiences. My expanding of GTM with arts-based/informed methods is relevant to those considering how meaning making is carried out through combining social scientific and arts methods (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014; Butler-Kisber, 2018), how artists are using and/or might use GTM (Cooper 2010; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Pace, 2012; Compton & Barratt, 2016), and those interested in the advancement of critical qualitative methodologies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Finley, 2017). Finally, it enabled me to meet my aims in foregrounding artists' voices, and in advancing knowledge of their art school experiences through extending GTM to construct the findings, which I review next.

8.2.2 Findings

8.2.2.1 Chapter Four: Motivation: Why go to Art School?

In chapter four, the first of three findings chapters, I detail the artists' motivations, interpreted through their reasons/justifications for attending art school, and introduce the core categories of identity, myth, freedom, and professionalisation. The outcomes contribute to understanding why people/artists study fine art under professional pedagogies, and in particular in London, answering a central enquiry of why go to art

school. I found the artists' identities were highly influential, that acting in congruence with beliefs about already being (and continuing to be) artists, that I call '*Always*', and desiring freedoms to only make, that I call 'to *Only*', were essential to this decision. This finding, developed through my performative approach and the deep sensitivity this enabled, highlights an identity-based intrinsic motivation and its interconnection with the core categories of myth and freedom. The identifications indicated desires for self-regulation, self-determination, and relative autonomy around seeking the freedom to make art in unrestricted (structureless) environments, seen as potentiated through art schooling. These are discussed as entangled with mythic stories of the born talented/gifted genius that is given special affordances to only make (Kris & Kurz, 1979[1934]). Through further discussion, I situated the artists' recollections of art making as stemming from childhood, and for some, having their early talents encouraged by family and teachers was intertwined with these mythic tropes. As well, belief in talent was positioned as interconnected with inequitable social, cultural, and economic capital (Banks, 2017). I found that these self-concepts and identity-based motivations are shaped through the proliferation of myths and inequalities perpetuated by the art school.

Other motivations centred on being drawn to the reputational value of the London art schools. I found this amounted to seeking *being chosen*, and represented having their perceived talent validated, by an esteemed institution, that *they had chosen* to do so. This interconnection was defined through my construction of connections, isolations, and clusters using the strung twine and connective post-its during Selective coding (figure 19, p.95). In chapter seven this correlation is developed into being understood as a significant aspect of the artists' professionalisation. A range of potential opportunities are revealed as part of the artists' decision making processes to attend those schools. These represent a set of needs/desires, including: having access to museums and galleries, exhibiting opportunities, and having an audience; exciting nightlife and social prospects; learning and being able to engage in professional performances like talking the talk; having access to esteemed teaching staff; and, finding, networking, and working with likeminded peers/people. With the last point, I do not mean the artists' needing likeminded others should be met by continuing with problematic homophilic selection processes (see Banks, 2017), but that overall, these

findings contribute to understanding some of the wider needs of prospective fine art students, for those developing and/or advising on HAE policy and pedagogies (for example Slater et al. 2013; Gordon-Nesbitt, 2015; Allen & Rowles, 2016; Kenning, 2018; Orr & Shreeve, 2018; Newall, 2019).

At the end of chapter four, tensions appear through the assertions of *Being Lucky*. This finding contradicts motivations discussed at other points, and is entangled with mythic characterisations (Kris & Kurz, 1979[1934]) and certain freedoms. The artists' assertions that they attended art school by accident, fluke, or luck, relinquish agency and control on their part, highlighting that they were chosen, yet also instilling the notion that they did not choose to be taught art, highlighting the dominance of their *Always* self-concept and the value placed on this. Underlying complexities in this are situated in considering what the art school's role and capacity is/might be in artists' identifications. Art school validation is valued on the one hand, notably in their seeking of reputation/endorsement, yet is simultaneously questioned/downplayed on the other through this assertion. I reveal the art school also perpetuates the mythologised message of luck in the artists' stories, telling them they will be lucky if they continue to practice after graduating. The tensions exposed in chapter four around validation, self-regulation, and self-authorship filter through the next chapters.

8.2.2.2 Chapter Five: Reaction: On the Inside

The focus in chapter five is on the artists' experiences of being at art school, specifically of structureless pedagogies and the C/crit, with the core categories of freedom, myth, and professionalisation being foregrounded through discussion of the artists' navigations of these. I answer my central research enquiries around what it was like at art school, and in particular what artists' experiences are of professional development. Using the term Art School Absorptions (ASA), the artists' agency around learning is highlighted in their encounters of skilling and skills considered to be taken from art school. This term underscores the active ways in which skilling was experienced, accepted, and rejected. I found ASA related to cognitive, visual, practical, and perceptual skills, and to cultural values around policies of transferable skills and employability (or lack thereof (P11:1366)). The politicisation of the artists' language around their skills indicates the prevalence of this rhetoric being used in/around their

art education, and perhaps highlights an awareness (and rejection) of their education being instrumentalised. This is significant to research being carried out by those who are critical of the teleological aims of art education and of student-consumer relations discussed in chapter two (for example Bishop, 2012; Baldacchino, 2015; Bunce et al., 2017).

Through my analysis of the artists' recollections through drawing, where I conceptualised through overlapping memories, I foregrounded deeply scathing remarks about art schooling, especially of professional development. These encapsulated my findings of the artists' disdain for, rejection of, and lack of acknowledgement or recollection of professional development occurring through art schooling. My position, that sits outside of the art school, but alongside their experiences, enabled the artists to give these unconstrained accounts, and the arts-based/informed methods I developed facilitated my capacity to foreground them. These findings could benefit HAE curricula developers in their understanding of how professional development is perceived, experienced, and translated into practice (or not) by those on the receiving end of these pedagogies, and perhaps how to find this out. They also balance an otherwise imbalanced debate I see coming from within art schools, which perceive the pedagogic devices, that I found to be problematic for the artists, to be conceptually doing what is intended (see Orr & Shreeve, 2018). C/crits are envisioned to engage artist-students, teaching them to think, be critical, learn the language, and gain group validation (Day, 2012; Crippa, 2014). In this study, I found C/crits were majoritively experienced as marginalising, aggressive, inaccessible, and misogynistic environments, and considered to some extent pointless. Structurelessness is intended to imbue independence, as vital preparation seen as central to artistic practice (see UAL, 2017a). In this study, a complex situation emerges, with my findings showing structurelessness is experienced unequally, depending on an individual's capacity to participate in anticipated ways, resulting in the artists feeling culpable and let down. The potential offered through this pedagogy, of being able 'to *Only*', collapses when factors of youth, and of feeling marginalised, hindered the artists' endeavours to make effective use of the freedoms in structurelessness which they had desired. Contradictorily, structurelessness afforded incidental, hidden, and *osmotic* learning, that satiated needs around self-regulatory behaviour. Structurelessness is designed to foster this (Orr &

Shreeve, 2018:7), so in this sense this pedagogical strategy has succeeded. However, by revealing a deeper understanding of these pedagogies from those who have experienced it, this study offers curricula developers and educational policymakers some critical considerations; that artist-students experiencing structurelessness need more support in order 'to *Only*', to construct their 'personalised' curricula (ibid.), and not feel excluded, let down, culpable, disappointed, and largely unable to continue practicing art after art school.

The final point I make in chapter five is a finding related to the core category of freedom, that artists negate the art school through deliberate rebuttals, or acts of negation, coupled with assertions of self-ledness, which embeds further tension in the artists' stories. Conflicts emerge around attending art school yet negating it, being given freedom 'to *Only*' yet being partially able/unable to participate, and between being legitimated/validated through art schooling yet seeking ways to self-define and self-regulate. I found the question of 'who defines artists?' that underlies this to be an interconnected concept, discovered through my cats-cradling AMM approach (figure 19, p.95) to grouping, isolating, and defining in the third cycle of coding, particularly in a connection I positioned between validation and negation. These conflicts foreground tussles between structure (context) and agency (conduct) that I find underlie the relationship between the artists and the art schools.

8.2.2.3 Chapter Six: Recovery|Continuum: Reclaiming, Regaining, Returning

In chapter six, the final findings chapter, I discuss what happens for the artists after art school, foregrounding the formulation and folding of art schooling into post-pedagogised and professional identities. I answer my central enquiry of what it has been like for them since leaving, as well as what they took from it, and what they wished for. My findings indicate an enduring emotional relationship with their education, centring on disappointment, feeling let down, and in some cases feeling traumatised by their experiences. Some of these findings highlight endemic institutional problems and are especially relevant to those researching inclusion and inequality towards rethinking policy and pedagogy around these areas (see Hayton et al., 2015; Asquith, 2015; Hatton, 2019; Brook et al., 2020). However, the lasting emotional effects of art schooling are discussed very little elsewhere, if at all. Indeed,

the artists use of hindsight and nostalgia to overcome magnitudes of discontent is positioned as significant in their ongoing continuums as art schooled artists. These findings could not have been unravelled without investigating mine and the artists' overlapping memories and experiences through my drawing as AMM method. As such, this study provides vital understanding where there is a lack. While changing recruitment processes could be one way of addressing unjust selections that perpetuate some of these problems (see Banks, 2017), this study highlights the need for consideration of addressing this and provisioning support from curricula designers and artist support networks as well as policy.

The influence the inside/outside dichotomy has on these issues is also underscored. I found this dynamic, which polarises 'inside' the art school 'bubble', against 'outside' in the 'real world', is deliberately constructed and maintained by the art school and the institutions (art & education) it exists within, and causes lasting tensions in the artists' lives. I highlight that the realities faced upon leaving contrast sharply with their experiences of art schooling, causing distress, and often impeding and/or preventing ongoing practice. In particular I found the artists' foregrounding of their difficulties with structurelessness, with its embedded artificial freedoms facilitating a possible and temporary capacity 'to *Only*', appears to cause the deepest tension. Some art schools are addressing the realties their artist-graduates are confronted with, such as a lack of affordable studio spaces or making a living from their work, through developing curricula and pedagogy that avoids creating artificial environments, and false hopes (see Cornford, 2016, cited in Campbell, L. 2016). While the physical studios' longevity is debated in pedagogical theory which questions its necessity in post-human settings (jagodzinski, 2018), and while the Covid-19[74] global pandemic has (temporarily) diminished/eliminated the art school studio, shifting the landscape towards 'post-studio' thinking and making (at the time of writing) (see Stromberg, 2020), this

[74] Education of all levels and disciplines moved online during the Covid-19 global pandemic. Art and design courses are understood to be especially difficult to facilitate without physical access to studios, workshops, and technical staff, due to the 'hands-on' nature of the courses (Stromberg, 2020). The move online has been received by students as inequitable and unfeasible, and many have requested postponement over online continuum (McLaughlin, 2020). It is considered some art schools see this as an opportunity to cut costs in a financially precarious time, by cancelling final degree shows, closing workshops and studios, and curtailing access to tutors and technicians (Shaw, 2020). In terms of the findings from this study, it is an interesting moment to consider how these changes might affect inside/outside dichotomies, address some realties of studio accessibility and needs, and challenge perceptions of structurelessness.

study contributes to critical understanding around the consequences of *not* addressing artist-graduate realities through pedagogy. My findings are relevant to HAE curricula developers, like Cornford (2016, cited in Campbell, L. 2016), and others discussed in this thesis (Orr & Shreeve, 2018; Newall, 2019) as well as more widely, and go towards collapsing the inside/outside dichotomy, not by bringing the market into the art school, but by hopefully encouraging the embedding of relativised relationships with expectations, possibilities, and contingencies of artistic practice after art school. The alternative being ongoing magnitudes of emotional discontent, significant pauses in practice, and necessary embedding of affective labour, all noteworthy barriers to continuing for artist-graduates that I have found in this study.

My findings highlight art schooled artists balance art making with levels of acceptance of needs and desires to earn money, of subemployment, and/or of monetising (non-object centred) practices. This raises the notion of myth, as the image my research conjures of artists as organised responsible planners contradicts mythic figures of radicals starving in their garrets. Instead, a key theme I highlight, developed from a connective post-it note in my cats-cradling approach between 'Realities' and 'Age' which became a key category, is the artists' capacities for adapting in their continuums post art school. In facing new realities and boundaries of practice, I found they were able to make specific adaptations to their work, changing its scale and culling if necessary, accepting and working around inevitable gaps in making, and dealing with the emotional aftereffects of their art schooling. Significantly, I found the artists' identifying and attempting to overcome artistic myths they found impeding to their progress. I call this 'de/re-mythification' and recognise it as important self-regulatory behaviour in the artists' recoveries from art schooling. This is tied to the development of post-pedagogised identifications that move away from pedagogised identities after art school. These recoveries offer critical insights for aiding the progression of artist-graduates, offering art schools the chance to consider their role in mythification, and potentially critiquing myth through curricula. This could foster transparency and understanding of the myths and elements of art schooling that these artists say are unhelpful, emotionally destabilising, and detrimental to their continuing practices.

8.2.2.4 Chapter Seven: The Constant Tussle: Identity, Myth, Freedom, & Professionalisation

Finally, in chapter seven, I consolidate the five core categories through analysis of the findings from chapters four, five, and six, answering my main research question of; what are artists' experiences and views of their undergraduate fine art education and encounters of professional development in London art schools? Overarchingly, I found art schooling conspires deep and ongoing emotional tensions, conflicts, and contradictions in the areas of identity, myth, freedom, and professionalisation in these artists' lives. I indicate this has become an ontological dimension affecting the artists' ways of being and believing in being, impacting most deeply on the artists' identifications formed through myth, freedom, and professionalisation that are all affected by the tensions. Having been incorporated into the artists' identities and conditions of practice, it becomes clear that art schooled tensions, conflicts, and contradictions require specific forms of affective labour. This is shown in the artists' de/re-mythifications that attempt to overcome impeding myths, in part constituting the identity work underlying moving from pedagogised identities towards professional ones. The artists contend with why they went to art school, if it validated them, if they could have done that themselves, and if they can continue to. They are challenged by if they needed it, what they needed it for, what purpose it served, or still serves. They tussle with being art schooled artists, and the freedoms, powers, and agency it afforded, or not, the identities and beliefs it (and they) consolidated and deconstructed through it, and with the lasting questions around past ideals of futures in potentia that (still) have not been, and might never be. The complexities in these artists' experiences that are foregrounded in these tensions were only knowable through an approach which, through arts-based/informed methods, fostered a deep sensitivity to and multilevel conceptualising of the artists' stories, enabling a particular analysis and understanding of what was said that is interwoven through the intricacies of these findings.

A central concept of this study reveals multiple identities that are co-constructed through art schooling, and the ways they are formulated through the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions that frame them. Pedagogised identities are shaped through negotiations of reputational value, attending C/crits and being validated/invalidated by The Group, and being included/excluded by specific assessment practices and institutional codes. Mythologised identities are also formed through art schooling,

particularly related to being lucky, and especially in having exceptional freedoms 'to *Only*', perpetuated through structurelessness. Both pedagogised and mythologised identities are de/reconstructed afterwards, and post-pedagogised identities arise as recovered and regained identities from these, with impeding parts somewhat relinquished and motivating aspects retained. The artists' multiple identities I found in this study, not only eschew singular mythologies, but highlight a flexible oscillation of available identities that are drawn upon and developed in different circumstances that are relevant to research on the development of artists' identities discussed throughout this thesis (for example Bain, 2005; Taylor & Littleton, 2012; McRobbie, 2016; Orr & Shreeve, 2018), especially through art schooling, what they encompass, and shifting definitions/perceptions of them.

Myth and identity are highly intertwined, and a related finding is the specific identity work carried out around de/re-mythification. I found the artists' recognitions and rejections of myths that affected them, shaped assertions, projections, and protections of certain identities, as well as aspects related to their practice, such as earning capacity and propensity for precarity. The work carried out around myth, through-deliberate and incidental de/re-mythification, both influence and are influenced by the artists' identities. In positioning de/re-mythification as a form self-regulation in ongoing (professional) identity work, I highlight its significance for art schools to consider in gaining further insight into their mutual role in this, and perhaps becoming more transparent and addressing the effects of the myths they perpetuate, which could be folded into educational policy and pedagogy development.

Navigations of freedoms underscore the artists' practices of freedom, construed through speech acts analysed from the findings chapters and first developed through drawing as AMM and my performative approach that sought out the artists' performances. These include acts of congruence, acts of negation, and acts of de/re-mythification, coupled with assertions of self-determination, self-ledness, and self-regulation. Together these enable what I term 'profound-reified-autonomies'. These relativised and finite freedoms are constructed around the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions resulting from art schooling. They are seated through the (im)possibility of being able 'to *Only*', potentiated validation and legitimation, and their possible agency over myths and

identities. The consistent speech acts throughout the interviews towards these ends are positioned as identity work in action as a form of negotiated affective labour. These findings offer deeper understanding of the artists' needs around self-regulation and expressions of agentic capacity. If taken on by art schools, this could help them develop awareness of the restrictions and controls particular pedagogies and art schooled discourses exert on students and graduates, potentially leading to more nuanced pedagogy/curricula containing an embedded understanding of what support might be necessary and therefore offered for students and alumni.

Finally, the artists' professionalisation and their professional(ised) identities are situated through their navigations of the art schooled tensions, conflicts, and contradictions. I found the artists rejected the title, and sometimes the sentiment, of 'being professional', which is interpreted as a self-regulatory act constituting a rejection of institutionalised, instrumentalised, and pedagogised identities towards post-pedagogised ones. Professional identifications are found to be intertwined with post-pedagogised identities, navigated and realised through and after art schooling, in negotiation with the 'real world' and in ongoing plural contexts of collective authorship. Negotiations took place among the reputational values, currency, and approval sought and gained through attending art school and enacted in validator settings, in the accounts of being lucky that foreground being chosen and validated, and in assertions of self-ledness and acts of negation intended to diminish the art school's powers and heighten the artists' agency over self-definition. This furthers critical understanding of the relationship between art schools and professionalisation, and is potentially fundamental to policy debates around employability and enterprise agenda that necessitate professional development in art schooling as foregrounded in chapter two (see Smith et al., 2000; Belfiore & Upchurch, 2013; Federici, 2017).

8.2.3 Original Contribution

This study's original contribution can be summarised as being in its presenting and detailing of the complex intersections between artists' identities, myths, freedoms, and professionalisation, that are connected by lasting tensions, conflicts, and contradictions caused by art schooling. I demonstrate how these shape art schooled artists lives and careers, and how they are caused by art schools embedding myths in their structureless

pedagogies, which afford and constrain particular freedoms, shaping artists' identities and professionalisation through this. These findings are novel to this study, and complement and extend studies that are concerned with art school and fine art education. Other studies do not bring together and view art schooling and art schooled artists through the combined lenses of identity, myth, and freedom, to understand professionalisation. Nor do they show how these are interconnected through particular art schooled tensions, conflicts, and contradictions.

In summary, this study:

- Provides the details and the causes of the lasting emotionally embedded tensions, conflicts, and contradictions that art schooling is perpetuating, and how these shape the lives, practices, careers, and identities of those who attend.
- Shows how art schooled artists' multiple identities are ongoingly shaped through these tensions, conflicts, and contradictions, particularly professional identities.
- Indicates how impeding myths of being able to '*Only*' are perpetuated through art school's structureless pedagogies, which embed tensions in art schooled artists' practices and careers due to the challenges this poses to participation.
- Exposes structurelessness as being inequitable and not working for everyone. It is dependent on a students' capacity to engage, only working for those who are able to participate in this accepted single choice model of fine art education.
- Positions relativised and finite freedoms as being necessarily constructed and navigated around the tensions created by structurelessness during and after art school, affecting ongoing practices.
- Specifies the particular navigations involved in art schooled artists' professionalisation and how this is underscored by these complex tensions, conflicts, and contradictions, affecting capacities to see oneself as and operate as a professional artist.

Art schools are not discussed as places where their structureless pedagogies conspire unequal grounds for participation, are built on myths, and embed fallacies of freedoms that will unlikely be experienced afterwards; where these false freedoms cause deep tensions for artists during and after art school, impeding, stalling, and curtailing artists'

practices as a result; nor where artists' identities require ongoing de/reconstruction through the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions in this, resulting in identifications that necessarily and consistently navigate the difficult emotional aftereffects of having been art schooled, and are hesitant to operate as 'professional' or 'professionalised'. Art schools have not been positioned as sites that artists aspire to attend and afterwards necessarily stop making, putting practices (and identities) on hold as they struggle to adapt to starkly different realities, to deal with lasting magnitudes of discontent, and continuously engage their energies and affective labour to recover from art schooling and the myths it entrenches, as I have found in this study.

8.2.4 Policy Implications

These findings disrupt and therefore influence a number of key areas of thinking within art schools and HAE policy, that have not been challenged in this way before. These include:

- Contesting the role of the longstanding pedagogical tradition of structurelessness in art schools, situating its inequitable participation, and asking that art schools recognise their role in students not experiencing these pedagogies equally and that the aftereffects are impeding to graduate art practices.
- Questioning the relevance of structurelessness and rethinking it for artist-students to be able to engage more equitably in their art schooling, so that artist-graduates could perhaps build more stable and relative practices afterwards (and sooner).
- Asking whether art schools could understand their embedding of myths into their pedagogies and curriculums, and to consider the influences of this on the identity-shaping/validating aspects of art schooling that are affected.
- Suggesting professional development is carried out more coherently in the ways artist-students learn through pedagogy, not by increasing explicit professional development aligned to market-oriented careers, nor through structurelessness that is aligned to the individualisation of creative work (McRobbie, 2016) and false freedoms, but by relativising pedagogies towards artists' needs around sustaining practices after graduating.

- Challenging reports that suggest negative experiences of art schooling are only encountered immediately upon leaving (see UAL, 2017, TEF submission report), asking art schools to acknowledge the lasting effects of art schooling as ongoing.
- Highlighting artists' trajectories involving art schooling as something that is aspired to and necessarily recovered from afterwards, taking unspecified amounts of time and periods of adjustment, perhaps requiring specific kinds of additional support.

Next, I further position the study's impact, making additional recommendations aimed at policy/pedagogy development through a series of as yet unanswered questions.

8.3
Recommendations: Unanswered Questions

Though I raise awareness of the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions I have found to be caused by art schooling, I do not necessarily consider it possible, feasible, or perhaps even desirable to eradicate this altogether from fine art education, nor that art schools alone might be able to address this given their position in the wider institutions of art and education that exert certain pressures on them. With this in mind, and in light of the nuances presented in my findings, the following questions and recommendations are intended as invitations for artists, art schools, curricula designers, pedagogy developers, and HAE and cultural policymakers to consider. Doing so might enable better support for artists to develop professional, and/or more stable and workable practices through their art schooling, and into their working lives as graduates afterwards.

This research answers the question; what are artists' experiences and views of their undergraduate fine art education and encounters of professional development in London art schools? The implications of which contest the narratives art schools perpetuate, and rethinks the relationships of agency and structure between artists and art schools. In doing so, it asks; how might art schools recognise the complexities in their professional pedagogies as embedding lasting emotional tensions and difficulties in their graduates' practices, careers, identities, and lives? Can they acknowledge their

complicities, and if they could, what might fine art pedagogies look like instead? And, could pedagogies fold in that critical reflection with the knowledge of artists' needs and behaviours, foregrounded through this study, to engender better support for artist-students and artist-graduates? I ask these questions of art schools so those developing curricula and pedagogies under employability and enterprise agendas, governed by REF and TEF (outlined in chapter two), might re-evaluate the professional pedagogies developed in accordance with these. If art schools reflected on these pedagogies, acknowledging the tensions they conspire are impeding to the development of professional practices they might better understand the needs of artist-students and support artist-graduates' ongoing careers, identities, and lives. Art schools could potentially foster more relevant and relative fine art education that is based in meeting artists' needs, not just while they are studying, but afterwards too. Further questions to these ends are; can art schools recognise the gap between intended experiences and envisioned outcomes of art schooling, and the artists' recalled experiences revealed in this study? Could art schools acknowledge that not everyone is participating in their single choice pedagogies of enforced independence in the anticipated ways? And, if they can, what kinds of changes might be made to help their students to participate? These questions position the gap between intention and effect as problematic, but also indicate that the gap *is* there so that those making curricula/pedagogical decisions in art schools might reflect on this study's critique of the gap and what it entails.

Further questions to consider are: do art schools need to become aware that they are perpetuating unrealistic professional pedagogies which draw on tacit myths, which make everything the responsibility of the artist-student/graduate? If they did, how might art schools address artist-students' desires to '*Only*' through the provisioning of structurelessness, which stages artificial freedoms, alongside the realities faced after art schooling? And, what might art schooling be like if pedagogies and curricula were developed to be transparent about the myths they draw on? Related to this is the question of; what would happen, or what would art schooling look like, if the inside/outside dichotomy which fuels and is fuelled by these mythologies were collapsed through pedagogical interventions, without prioritising reliance on the market, but creating relative scenarios for artist-students? By relative scenarios, I mean the kinds being incorporated into thinking at some art schools, like Brighton, such as

not making a living from art practice alone/at all, and not having a studio (see Cornford, n.d., cited in Rowles, 2013). Acting on these questions would require fundamental shifts in thinking and doing, given the art school's relationship with universities since their subsumption which they are somewhat led by (Beck & Cornford, 2012; Federici, 2017). It would also require accepting that art schooling is built on, perpetuates and maintains myths, which, though motivating, are also impeding and shape some of the lasting tensions in art schooled artists' lives. A critical understanding of this stems from this study, and while what I reveal is not intended to explicitly ameliorate the problems in this, it might give art schools greater capacity to understand their role and make relevant changes (or not).

Policies that have actively subsumed the art school and artist-students' experiences into neoliberal situations (Beck & Cornford, 2012), through the *Polytechnic* and *University Eras* (Llewelyn, 2015), where the market has enforced the conditions under which professional pedagogies are created (Kenning, 2018), are unsettled through this questioning. It collapses longstanding discourses which have informed policymaking, such as myths that have perpetuated object-centred practices which function well in further entrepreneurialising artists and their output. Instead, it replaces it with policy development stemming from artists' experiences and views of their education that question, and perhaps change, these dominant discourses.

Finally, I ask; to what extent can or should artist-students and artist-graduates untangle themselves from the emotionally embedded tensions, conflicts and contradictions seated through professional pedagogies of the kinds found in this study, which appear active and prevalent? And, if pedagogies remain the same, could artist-students challenge these and do artist-students and graduates need support for this, and what might this support look like? These final questions bring artists back to the centre of this discussion. Indeed, the implications, recommendations and questions positioned here, could only be situated through listening to artists' views and perspectives, and through an appropriate approach which directly addressed the subject and developed particular sensitives to hear and interpret these views. The artists, who candidly told me about their art school experiences, who acted in congruence with their beliefs, who raised their concerns, and divulged unconstrained emotional recollections, become the

curricula designers and policy makers, shaping these through their reactions to the experiences they encountered at art school, and through the careers they feel they can have and construct as a result. By positioning artists at the centre of this study, their voices, stories, perspectives, and experiences become the fabric of the policies and pedagogies that shape theirs and other artists' education, practices, careers, identities, and lives.

8.4 Research Limitations & Further Study

This research of course has limits, which I outline here alongside my recommendations for further study which could be carried out to continue developing critical understanding of this period of artists' development and its impact on their professional lives.

8.4.1 Limitations

The limitations outlined in chapter three are revisited here in light of my findings. The semi-unavoidable focus on London art schools through wanting to research professional pedagogies, has been considered potentially narrow. I do not cover experiences of regional art schools, or those outside of the UK, which may have given a broader picture of art schooling, perhaps highlighting locational differences and/or similarities. However, though the London focus confines the findings, critical understanding of artists' specific needs, expectations, participation, and the lasting effects of (London) art schooling have been generated, which can be considered when viewing the broader picture. As well, the size of my sample, of twelve participants, could be considered a small group to derive substantive data from. However, as per the GTM approach, the intensive qualitative data coding and concurrent analysis restricted this to twelve participants, following the development and saturation of categories the sample of twelve was felt to be suitable to meet my research aims. My study speaks directly to those who experienced art schooling, but not to those who are currently teaching in art schools. Though some of the participants were also artist-teachers, there are potentially some missing voices that could have illuminated discussion on aspects of structure and agency between artists and the art school further, whereas my focus was on recipient experiences of fine art education.

The methods and apparatus I designed to carry out the study, including the chronological questioning in the semi-structured interviews, and physical and spatial limits to movement when I carried out Axial coding also emerged as limitations. The influence of which was noted once piecing back together the fractured data in the thesis, which though foregrounds broad sociological and cultural themes of identity, myth, motivation, freedom, agency and action, adaptation in continuum, and professionalisation, are to some extent sequentially led by each other. Furthermore, although I recruited the participants (mostly) directly, they chose to participate, and their motivations to do so, such as having particular agendas, may have led discussion in places. However, where I suspected this, I coded and analysed it as such. As well, I consider the influence of the tumultuous political backdrop (of 2015-2020) and the polarised views it has conspired, on both what the participants wanted to discuss, and my ways of thinking, interpreting, and presenting the data. I have been aware of this and have challenged it through my analysis and self-diffractive navigations. Finally, though I situate my emic position as aiding this research, it is also a possible limitation in terms of my capacity for emotional distance and ability to deal with research bias in instances of empathy, sympathy, agreement, or incongruity between mine and the artists' experiences, though my arts-based/informed methods addressed this straight on, I do not claim absolute impartiality.

8.4.2 Further Study

On these bases, I recommend further study could be carried out across regional art schools throughout the UK, to give a broader understanding of the reasons people attend those schools, and the different/comparable experiences of tensions around identity, myth, freedom, and professionalisation during and after attending. A similar study on alternative art schools, which surface in this research, could also contribute to thinking and discussion on this, and specifically around art schools' relationships with universities and HAE policy. This would build a more nuanced picture of the UK scene, and of different motivations and experiences that would perhaps be less to do with speculative reputational value of specific institutions or what major cities offer in terms of opportunity and excitement, that were found to be London-specific aspects in this study.

Other areas of interest for further study, include research into the theoretical frameworks that art schools embed through their critical theory/history of art curricula. A study on this might carry out content analysis of core reading lists and syllabuses of art schools to gain an understanding of what approaches influence artists' thinking, practice, and identities. Additionally, this type of study could incorporate analysis of people's experiences, perhaps including artist-teachers', through interviews. A related area I touch upon in this study pertains to current cultural debates around inequalities embedded in and influenced by art school curricula. A study which specifically considers these aspects of art schooling, again involving critical analysis of course syllabuses, coupled with investigating the experiences of this would also work well as a Grounded Theory study. Elsewhere, more research feels necessary to unpack why professional pedagogies and professional practice were seemingly first foregrounded in London institutions, which could aid decentralising debates (see Hambleton, 2017).

There appears to be a continuing need for more information and better understanding around particular barriers to participation in art schooling, some of which are surfaced through my work. A study which focuses more explicitly on experiences of structurelessness particularly, and how people navigate that throughout art schooling could be useful in understanding the specific marginalisation this has been found to influence in this research. As well, the pedalling of the inside/outside dichotomy is in need of greater understanding, through assessing the role of the wider art world, including museums and galleries, the art market, and individuals. Through this kind of investigation, the relationship between fine art education and industry, and whether this association can or should be met or measured through fine art education, as posited in chapter two, could be better understood. I advocate that while those working in the sector might generate important research in their field, I have found that coming from an 'outside' institution can provide fresh insights. I also found, somewhat contradictorily, and highlighting tensions in researcher positions in light of the limitations outlined above, that coming from an emic position can potentially create significant, safe, and open platforms for more artists' voices to be heard, which I believe is critical in the debates that concern them.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Sample of Information Sheet

Digital copy emailed to all participants prior to interviews and hard copy given in interview.

Information Sheet

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview as part of the research for my MPhil/PhD thesis. The conversations carried out through the interview will be used to support my thesis and will go towards informing the discussions that will be considered throughout my study.

All interviewees are given this information sheet, which details the usage of information and comment given during the interview, including how it will be recorded, used, and stored, ensuring no misuse occurs. After agreeing to the information sheet, you will need to sign a separate Consent Form that will confirm your participation in the interview. If you have any further questions about anything on this information sheet or about the interview at any stage during the process please get in touch either by telephone or by email.

My Details

Sarah Scarsbrook - MPhil/PhD Student in Arts Policy and Management at Birkbeck College, University of London.

email: sarahscarsbrook@hotmail.com
tel: 07815 674 959

Thesis Outline

The working title of my study is *The Professionalisation of Visual Arts Practice in the UK from the mid 1980s to the Present*. It looks at the evolution of artists' identities and artistic practice during this 30-year period relating it to changes in the political, social, economic and educational landscapes throughout this time. It encounters the impact of the visual arts being accepted as a creative industry, and the influence of commerce, the art market and recent economic policy effecting the direction of artistic labour. Specifically, it investigates the influence of fine art education, and especially the impact of London's art schools on the becoming stage of visual artists. The study explores values, agency and identification in relation to artists' art schooling which shape the perception of today's artist in society by themselves and by others.

Your participation & how the information you give will be used

Using the interview as my data collection method will give access to direct experience and knowledge of the situation today from a range of graduates from London art schools. Each participant's interview will support and inform my study through firsthand experience giving personal narratives and historical knowledge to underpin the thesis with individual accounts. Selected interview material will go towards making an essay-film on the subject, which you will be invited to voluntarily select material for as part of a co-editing process at a later date. The essay film will use a selection of visual material being gathered throughout the project and will use a range of chosen sound edits and transcribed text from the interviews to be nominated by its participants.

The interview will be carried out by mutual consent and will be arranged to go ahead in person, at an appropriate location agreed upon by the interviewee in advance. They

will last approximately 2 hours, and will consist of 5 - 6 main questions/discussion points.

The interview will be recorded using an mp3 recorder, which will be downloaded and stored safely on my personal computer that only I access, and which is password protected. Qualitative information will be drawn from the recording of the interview that is relevant to the main discussions in my work. Particular quotes may be used from this to support arguments and more deeply illustrate ideas throughout the thesis. Transcribed text and audio clips may be used in an accompanying essay-film that will support the thesis, which you will be invited to voluntarily participate in a co-editing process at a later date. Any selected audio will be transcribed and read out by an actor to protect anonymity.

Confidentiality will be highly respected so that no other party will gain access to the recorded material. Participant privacy will be given to all participants at all times.

Thank you,

Sarah Scarsbrook

Signed by:

Participant:

Name: …… **Signed:** ……

Date: ……

Sarah Scarsbrook:

Name: …… **Signed:** ……

Date: ……

Appendix 2: Sample of Consent Form

Digital copy emailed to all participants prior to interviews and two hard copies given in interview - one copy signed by the participant, and one copy signed by me and retained for records.

Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet, which explains the details of the study and how the information I give will be used as part of Sarah's MPhil/PhD research and I accept the details and conditions therein of the interview process. I understand that I can contact Sarah either by e-mail or telephone if I have further questions at any time before or after the interview is planned to go ahead or has been carried out.

I understand that anything I say in the interview may be referred to and/or quoted from during the course of Sarah's thesis and essay-film.

I agree to participate in the interview with Sarah on the understanding that I will remain anonymous.

I accept the information given during the interview will only be used for this research and for publications / projects that might arise from this research and that anonymity will be given in any instance.

I agree that any topics and issues discussed within the interview is treated with confidentiality and understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to being recorded via digital audio mp3 recordings for the interview.

I confirm I am over 18 years of age.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed by:

Participant:

Name: …… **Signed:** ……

Date: ……

Sarah Scarsbrook:

Name: …… **Signed:** ……

Date: ……

Appendix 3: Sample of First Cycle Open Coding

Descriptive, InVivo, Values, and Process codes I applied to the transcribed interview data are shown.

1	INTERVIEW 6		DESCRIPTIVE topic over content		IN VIVO		VALUES ATTITUDE, VALUE, BELIEF		PROCESS
28	SS: To start off, um, why did you go to art school and	6D28		6IN28		6V28		6P28	
29	why did you choose the particular school that you went	6D29		6IN29		6V29		6P29	
30	to?	6D30		6IN30		6V30		6P30	
31		6D31		6IN31		6V31		6P31	
32	P6: Mmm. That's a good question. I think that- I	6D32		6IN32	THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION'	6V32		6P32	BEING CONVIVIAL
33	mean, I grew up in Place A, round the corner from	6D33	GROWING UP IN PLACE A	6IN33	I GREW UP IN PLACE A'	6V33		6P33	GIVING BACKGROUND
34	where we are now.	6D34		6IN34		6V34		6P34	
35		6D35		6IN35		6V35		6P35	
36	SS: Mmm.	6D36		6IN36		6V36		6P36	
37		6D37		6IN37		6V37		6P37	
38	P6: Um, and I come from a quite atypical	6D38	ATYPICAL BACKGROUND	6IN38	I COME FROM A QUITE ATYPICAL BACKGROUND'	6V38	ARTISTS AND DIFFERENT TO YOU	6P38	STATING ASSUMED DIFFERENCE
39	background, in the sense that I went to a state	6D39	STATE SCHOOL	6IN39	I WENT TO A STATE SCHOOL'	6V39	B: MOST ARTISTS DON'T GO TO STATE SCHOOL	6P39	GOING TO STATE SCHOOL
40	school, um, (1) I'm not middle- well, I'm not from a	6D40	NOT MIDDLE CLASS	6IN40	I'm NOT MIDDLE- WELL I'm NOT FROM A MIDDLE CLASS BACKGROUND'	6V40	B: YOU CAN BE MIDDLE CLASS AND NOT FROM A MIDDLE CLASS BACKGROUND	6P40	ASSERTING CLASS
41	middle-class background. I think my class position's	6D41	NOT FROM A MIDDLE-CLASS BACKGROUN	6IN41	PROBABLY COMPLEX AND MULTI-LAYERED	6V41	UNDERSTADN MY CLASS YOU WONT	6P41	ASSERTING DIFFERENCE
42	probably complex and multi-layered, at this point,	6D42	COMLEX CLASS	6IN42		6V42		6P42	
43	but, um, so, being an artist, or going to art school	6D43	NO OPTION OF ART SCHOOL	6IN43	BEING AND ARTIST, OR GOING TO ART SCHOOL	6V43	B: GOING TO ART SCHOOL DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN YOU'L BE AN ARTIST	6P43	BEING AN ARTIST
44	wasn't an option that was ever presented to me.	6D44		6IN44	GOING TO ART SCHOOL WASN'T AN OPTION THAT WAS EVER PRESENTED TO ME'	6V44	B: WORKING CLASS DON'T GIVE THEIR CHILDREN THE OPTION OF GOING TO ART SCHOOL	6P44	MAKING CLASS JUDGEMENTS
45		6D45		6IN45		6V45	B: MOST ART STUDENTS COME FROM MIDDLE CLASS BACKGROUNDS AND SO THEREFORE GET GIVEN THE OPTION TO GO TO ART SCHOOL	6P45	
46	SS: Mmhmm.	6D46		6IN46		6V46		6P46	
47		6D47		6IN47		6V47		6P47	
48	P6: I'll give an example of what I mean, so, I did	6D48		6IN48	ILL GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT I MEAN'	6V48	B: SHE DOESN'T GET MY PERSPECTIVE	6P48	MAKING IT CLEARER
49	GCSE Art and in the first term of my first year, of	6D49	ART AT GCSE	6IN49	I DID GCSE ART'	6V49		6P49	DOING GCSE ART
50	my GCSE, my Art teacher had some kind of nervous	6D50	ART TEACHER'S BREAKDOWN	6IN50	KIND OF NERVOUS BREAKDOWN AND WAS NEVER REPLACED'	6V50		6P50	
51	breakdown and was never replaced. (1) It wasn't the	6D51		6IN51	IT WASN'T THE PRIORITY'	6V51	B: ART WAS NOT A PRIORITY AT MY ART SCHOOL	6P51	EXPLAINING POSITION
52	priority. They didn't have money and so, for the	6D52		6IN52	THEY DIDN'T HAVE MONEY'	6V52	B: ART WAS NOT PRIORITISED AND WAS SEEN AS TOO EXPENSIVE AT MY SCHOOL	6P52	MAKING POINT
53	remainder of my GCSE, two years, essentially, um, I	6D53		6IN53		6V53		6P53	
54	effectively had to create my own curriculum.	6D54	CREATED OWN CURRICULUM AT GCSE	6IN54	I EFFECTIVELY HAD TO CREATE MY OWN CURRICULUM'	6V54	B: I CREATED MY OWN CURRICULUM FOR ART GCSE	6P54	CREATING OWN CURRICLUM
55		6D55		6IN55		6V55		6P55	
56	SS: (1) Wow.	6D56		6IN56		6V56		6P56	
57		6D57		6IN57		6V57		6P57	
58	P6: Based on stuff we had done previously, so, (ph.	6D58		6IN58		6V58		6P58	
59	00:01:52) learning how to how to use multiple	6D59	MAKING OWN CURRICULUM	6IN59	LEARNING HOW TO USE MULTIPLE FORMS'	6V59	B: I MADE A GOOD ART CURRICULUM TO PASS MY GCSE ART	6P59	
62	SS: Mmm.	6D62		6IN62		6V62		6P62	
63		6D63		6IN63		6V63		6P63	
64	P6: Um, and I think I found some old curriculum	6D64		6IN64		6V64		6P64	
65	papers in a cupboard somewhere, and I had- I	6D65	MAKING OWN CURRICULUM	6IN65		6V65		6P65	
66	essentially had to do it myself. Um, I was the only	6D66	SELF LEADING AT A YOUNG AGE	6IN66	I ESSENTIALLY HAD TO DO IT MYSELF'	6V66	B: FROM AN EARLY AGE I WAS SELF-LED	6P66	ASSERTING SELF-LED NATURE
67	person (1) in my year at school that was interested in	6D67		6IN67	I WAS THE ONLY PERSON IN MY YEAR AT SCHOOL THAT WAS INTERESTED IN ART'	6V67	B: I WAS THE ONLY ONE, I WAS DIFFERENT TO THE REST	6P67	BEING THE ONLY ONE
68	art. It was a class where the delinquent kids would	6D68	DELINQUENT KIDS IN ART CLASS	6IN68	IT WAS A CLASS WHERE THE DELINQUENT KIDS WOULD BE SENT'	6V68	B: ART CLASS WASN'T TAKEN SERIOUSLY AT MY SCHOOL	6P68	NOT TAKING ART SERIOUSLY
69	be sent in, to- just to keep them occupied for an hour	6D69		6IN69		6V69		6P69	
70	or so.	6D70		6IN70		6V70		6P70	
71		6D71		6IN71		6V71		6P71	
72	SS: Mmm.	6D72		6IN72		6V72		6P72	
73		6D73		6IN73		6V73		6P73	
74	P6: But I was lucky, in that a couple of the, kind of,	6D74	LUCKY	6IN74	I WAS LUCKY'	6V74	B: LUCK IS A PART OF MY STORY	6P74	FEELING LUCKY
75	people who were characterised as the school bullies,	6D75	BULLIES PROTECTING HER	6IN75	CHARACTERISED AS THE SCHOOL BULLIES'	6V75	B: THE PEOPLE THOUGHT OF AS BULLIES WEREN'T THAT BAD	6P75	DESTIGMATISING BULLIES
76	actually really liked what I was doing, and so,	6D76		6IN76	REALLY LIKED WHAT I WAS DOING'	6V76	B: ME AND THE DELINQUENTS GOT ON	6P76	ASSOCIATING SELF WITH THE DELINQUENTS
77	they'd make sure that no-one bothered me, when I	6D77		6IN77	THEY'D MAKE SURE NO ONE BULLIED ME'	6V77	B: THE BULLIES PROTECTED ME	6P77	BEING PROTECTED BY THE BULLIES

1	INTERVIEW 6		DESCRIPTIVE topic over content		IN VIVO		VALUES ATTITUDE, VALUE, BELIEF		PROCESS
78	was in my corner, trying to invent a curriculum.	6D78	INVENTING A CURRICULUM	6IN78	WHEN I WAS IN MY CORNER, TRYING TO INVENT MY CURRICULUM'	6V78	A: JUST GET ON WITH WHAT YOU WANT TO DO	6P78	ISOLATING SELF FROM OTHERS
79		6D79		6IN79		6V79	A: FOLLOW YOUR OWN PATH	6P79	
80	SS: Mmm.	6D80		6IN80		6V80		6P80	
81		6D81		6IN81		6V81		6P81	
82	P6: So, although I was, um, encouraged to go in	6D82		6IN82		6V82		6P82	
83	various academic paths, that, kind of, made sense	6D83	ENCOURAGED TO GO DOWN THE ACADEMIC ROUTE	6IN83	INTO VARIOUS ACADEMIC PATHS	6V83	B: ART ISNT SEEN AS ACADEMIC	6P83	BEING ENCOURAGED TO AVOUD ART
84	within the context of being from a- a background,	6D84		6IN84		6V84	B: I DID WHAT I WANTED TO DO	6P84	
85	where (2) not much expected of you, but actually,	6D85	CONETX OF BACKGROUND	6IN85	BEING FROM A BACKGROUND WHERE NOT MUCH IS EXPECTED OF YOU'	6V85	B: MY FAMILY WERENT SUPPOSED TO EXPECT MUCH	6P85	PRESENTING BACKGROUND
86	within my family, a tremendous amount was	6D86		6IN86	WITHIN MY FAMILY, A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT WAS EXPECTED OF ME'	6V86	V: WORK HARD TO MEET OTHERS EXPECTATIONS OF YOU	6P86	MEETING OTHERS EXPECTATIONS
87	expected of me-	6D87	EXPECTATION	6IN87		6V87	B: MY FAMILY EXPECTED ME TO DO WELL, SO I WILL	6P87	
88		6D88		6IN88		6V88		6P88	
89	SS: Mmm.	6D89		6IN89		6V89		6P89	
90		6D90		6IN90		6V90	A: ART IS SOMETHING YOU DO	6P90	
91	P6: I realised that what I loved to do was art. I still	6D91	LOVING ART	6IN91	I REALISED THAT WHAT I LOVED TO DO WAS ART'	6V91	B: ART IS MY FIRST LOVE	6P91	LOVING DOING ART
92	didn't know I could be an artist-	6D92	IMPOSSIBILITY OF BEING AN ARTIST	6IN92	I STILL DIDN'T KNOW I COULD BE AN ARTIST'	6V92	B: I NEEDED PERMISSION TO BE AN ARTIST	6P92	NOT BEING PERMITTED TO BE AN ARTIST
93		6D93		6IN93		6V93		6P93	
94	SS: Mmm.	6D94		6IN94		6V94		6P94	
95		6D95		6IN95		6V95		6P95	
96	P6: But I knew that's what I loved to do, so I ended	6D96		6IN96	I KNEW THAT'S WHAT I LOVED TO DO'	6V96		6P96	PROCLAIMING LOVE FOR ART
97	up doing a BTEC, because, again, we weren't	6D97	BTEC INSTEAD OF A-LEVELS	6IN97	I ENDED UP DOING A BTEC'	6V97	B: I SHOULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING ELSE THAN A BTEC	6P97	EXPLAING WHY DIDN'T DO A-LEVELS
98	encouraged to do A-levels.	6D98		6IN98	WE WERENT ENCOURAGED TO DO A-LEVELS	6V98	B: A'LEVELS ARE BETTER	6P98	ACKNOWLEDGING THE BTEC - A LEVEL HIERARCHY
99		6D99		6IN99		6V99		6P99	
100	SS: (1) Mmm.	6D100		6IN100		6V100		6P100	
101		6D101		6IN101		6V101		6P101	
102	P6: Um, for two years, but it ended up being really	6D102		6IN102	IT ENDED UP BEING REALLY GOOD	6V102	B: THE BTEC PROVED PEOPLE WRONG	6P102	PROTESTING THE BTEC'S WORTH
103	good, because I had a great tutor, who introduced	6D103	BTEC TUTOR	6IN103	I HAD A GREAT TUTOR'	6V103	B: HAVING A GREAT TUTOR MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE	6P103	HAVING A GREAT TUTOR
104	me to all kinds of contemporary practitioners, um,	6D104	CONTEMPORARY PRACTITIONERS	6IN104	OF CONTEMPORARY PRACTIONERS'	6V104	B: ART TUTORS SHOULD INTRODUCE YOU TO ARTISTS	6P104	
105	(1) and we had some really interesting artist-	6D105		6IN105		6V105	B: ARTISTS ARE PRACTIONERS	6P105	DENOTING ARTISTS
106	teachers, as well. So, JT, who you may	6D106		6IN106	WE HAD SOME REALLY INTERESTING ARTIST-TEACHERS, AS WELL'	6V106	V: TO BE GOOD, ART TEACHERS SHOULD BE ARTISTS TOO	6P106	HAVING ARTIST-TEACHERS
107	have heard of, was one of my tutors on the a module	6D107		6IN107	YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF'	6V107	B: WE HAD WELL KNOWN ARTISTS TEACHING US	6P107	
108	of that, um, (1) BTEC, and BP, who's a	6D108		6IN108	WHO'S A GREAT PHOTOGRAPHER'	6V108		6P108	BIGGING UP TUTORS
109	great photographer. I mean-	6D109		6IN109		6V109		6P109	
110		6D110		6IN110		6V110		6P110	
111	SS: Mmhmm	6D111		6IN111		6V111		6P111	
112		6D112		6IN112		6V112		6P112	
113	P6: There were some really interesting people. And	6D113		6IN113		6V113		6P113	
114	then, through that, I thought, 'Oh, if they're artists	6D114		6IN114		6V114		6P114	
115	and they're, kind of, relatively young, and, you	6D115	NORMALISING YOUNG ARTISTS	6IN115	KIND OF RELATIVELY YOUNG, AND, YOU KNOW, NORMAL'	6V115	B: YOU CAN BE NORMAL AND BECOME AN ARTIST	6P115	
116	know, normal-'	6D116		6IN116		6V116	A: I'm NORMAL	6P116	POSITING SELF AS NORMAL
117		6D117		6IN117		6V117		6P117	
118	SS: Mmm.	6D118		6IN118		6V118		6P118	
119		6D119		6IN119		6V119		6P119	
120	P6: 'Then I could actually do that.'	6D120		6IN120	I COULD ACTUALLY DO THAT	6V120	INFLUENCED ON MY BTEC I WOULD NEVER THOUGHT BEING AN ARTIST COULD BE POSSIBLE	6P120	SEEING THAT SHE COULD BE AN ARTIST
121		6D121		6IN121		6V121		6P121	DESCRIBING REALISATION THAT SHE COULD BE AN ARTIST
122	SS: Mmhmm.	6D122		6IN122		6V122		6P122	
123		6D123		6IN123		6V123		6P123	
124	P6: Um, and so, from there, I, um, this was, kind of	6D124		6IN124	THIS WAS KIND OF POST-YBA	6V124	B: I WAS JUST BEHIND THE YBAS	6P124	
125	post-YBA, but YBA was still (1) in the air, um, I	6D125	POST-YBA	6IN125	YBA WAS STILL IN THE AIR'	6V125	B: I'VE BEEN INFLUENCED BY THE YBAS	6P125	ALLUDING TO INFLUENCE OF YBAS
126	was	6D126		6IN126		6V126		6P126	GIVING YEARS ATTENDED
127		6D127		6IN127		6V127		6P127	
128	SS: Mmm	6D128		6IN128		6V128		6P128	
129		6D129		6IN129		6V129		6P129	
130	P6: Um, I did a load of visits to various art schools.	6D130	ART SCHOOL VISITS	6IN130	A LOAD OF VISITS TO VARIOUS ART SCHOOLS'	6V130	A: DO YOUR RESEARCH	6P130	DESCRIBING ART SCHOOL CHOICE
131	I went to Art School Y and hated it, um, you know, I wen	6D131	HATING ART SCHOOL Y	6IN131	I WENT TO ART SCHOOL Y AND HATED IT'	6V131	B: ART SCHOOL Y WAS NOT THE PLACE FOR ME	6P131	STATING DIP6AIN FOR ART SCHOOL Y
132	all over. And Art School X was the one place where	6D132	ART SCHOOL X	6IN132	ART SCHOOL X WAS THE ONE PLACE'	6V132	B: ART SCHOOL X WAS THE ONE	6P132	FEELING AT HOME WITH ART SCHOOL X
133	(2) I thought, (4) 'I can just see myself being.' Um,	6D133		6IN133	I CAN JUST SEE MYSELF BEING'	6V133	B: I KNEW STRAIGHT AWAY ART SCHOOL X WAS RIGHT FOR ME	6P133	KNOWING STRAIGHT AWAY
134	(2) in many respects, I think the other institutions	6D134		6IN134		6V134		6P134	
135	felt really traditional.	6D135	TRADITION IN OTHER INSTITUTIONS	6IN135	THE OTHER INSTITUTIONS FELT REALLY TRADITIONAL'	6V135	A: I'm NOT INTO TRADITION	6P135	VEERING AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL

1	INTERVIEW 6		DESCRIPTIVE topic over content		IN VIVO		VALUES ATTITUDE, VALUE, BELIEF		PROCESS
136		6D136		6IN136		6V136	B: ART SCHOOL X IS NOT TRADITIONAL	6P136	
137	SS: Mmm.	6D137		6IN137		6V137		6P137	
138		6D138		6IN138		6V138		6P138	VIEWING OTHER ART SCHOOLS AS FINISHING SCHOOLS
139	P6: And, also, just like finishing schools for really	6D139	FINSHING SCHOOLS	6IN139	LIKE FINISHING SCHOOLS'	6V139	B: I DIDN'T WANT TO BE AT A FINISHING SCHOOL	6P139	DECIDING AGAINST FINSHING SCHOOLS
140	posh people.	6D140	POSH PEOPLE	6IN140	FOR REALLY POSH PEOPLE'	6V140	WOULDN'T FIT IN WITH POSH PEOPLE	6P140	NOT WANTING TO ASSOCIATE WITH POSH PEOPLE
141		6D141		6IN141		6V141		6P141	
142	SS: Mmhmm.	6D142		6IN142		6V142		6P142	
143		6D143		6IN143		6V143		6P143	
144	P6: And I knew that I didn't want that. And so,	6D144		6IN144	I KNEW THAT I DIDN'T WANT THAT'	6V144	IT WASN'T A POSH FINISHING SCHOOL	6P144	KNOWING WHAT SHE WANTED
145	what happened was that a bunch of us, I think five	6D145	FIVE APPLYING TO SAME COURSE	6IN145		6V145		6P145	
146	of us from this course applied. There were three,	6D146		6IN146	FIVE OF US FROM THIS COURSE APPLIED'	6V146	B: ART SCHOOL X WAS THE POPULAR CHOICE	6P146	DESCRIBING APPLYING TO ART SCHOOL X
147	kind of, really macho guys and me and a	6D147		6IN147	THREE KIND OF REALLY MACHO GUYS AND ME AND A [redacted] WOMAN'	6V147	B: ART SCHOOL X ATTRACTED THE MACHO BOYS	6P147	
148	woman, who (1) was actually a refugee from	6D148	REFUGEE	6IN148	WAS ACTUALLY A REFUGEE FROM YUGOSLAVIA'	6V148	B: [redacted] WAS THE LEAST LIKELY TO GET IN	6P148	CASTING DISPERSIONS
149	Yugoslavia (2) and the presumption was that the	6D149		6IN149	THE MACHO GUYS WOULD GET IN, 'CAUSE THEY'RE MACHO GUYS'	6V149	B: ART SCHOOL X WAS FULL OF MACHO GUYS SO THEY'LL BE THE ONES TO GET THE PLACE	6P149	ALLUDING TO THE ASSUMED ART SCHOOL X TYPE
150	macho guys would get in, 'cause they're macho	6D150	MACHO GUYS	6IN150		6V150		6P150	
151	guys, but actually, we got in and they didn't.	6D151		6IN151	WE GOT IN AND THEY DIDN'T'	6V151	B: ART SCHOOL X SURPRISED US	6P151	GETTING IN OVER THE MACHO GUYS
152		6D152		6IN152		6V152		6P152	
153	SS: Mmm.	6D153		6IN153		6V153		6P153	
154		6D154		6IN154		6V154		6P154	
155	P6: And that, for me, was, like, 'Oh, okay, this is,	6D155	POSSIBILITIES	6IN155		6V155		6P155	
156	um, (1) this is something that is possible and	6D156		6IN156		6V156		6P156	
157	feasible.'	6D157		6IN157	OK, THIS IS SOMEHTING THAT IS POSSIBLE AND FEASIBLE'	6V157	B: A SCHOOL X GAVE ME A CHANCE	6P157	BEING SURPRISED AT REALITY OF ART SCHOOL X GIVING HER A CHANCE
158		6D158		6IN158		6V158	B: ART SCHOOL X PUT THEIR FAITH IN ME	6P158	
159	SS: Mmm.	6D159		6IN159		6V159		6P159	
160		6D160		6IN160		6V160		6P160	
161	P6: So, that's- that's the kind of, (1) um, simplified	6D161	SIMPLE VERSION	6IN161	SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF THE JOURNEY'	6V161	B: SHE DOESN'T NEED THE IN DEPTH VERSION	6P161	WITHOLDING
162	version of the journey to-	6D162		6IN162		6V162		6P162	GIVING THE CENSORED VERSION
163		6D163		6IN163		6V163		6P163	WANTING TO GIVE SIMPLE VERSION
164	SS: Yeah, yeah.	6D164		6IN164		6V164		6P164	
165		6D165		6IN165		6V165		6P165	
166	P6: To art school.	6D166		6IN166	JOURNEY TO ART SCHOOL'	6V166	B: GETTING TO ART SCHOOL WAS JOURNEY	6P166	DESRIBING JOURNEY
167		6D167		6IN167		6V167		6P167	
168	SS: Um, so, yeah. In that, you, kind of- a couple of	6D168		6IN168		6V168		6P168	
169	things, that I, sort of, picked out, I suppose-	6D169		6IN169		6V169		6P169	
170		6D170		6IN170		6V170		6P170	
171	P6: Mmm.	6D171		6IN171		6V171		6P171	
172		6D172		6IN172		6V172		6P172	
173	SS: Were, you mentioned at the beginning, um,	6D173		6IN173		6V173		6P173	
174	about, sort of, class, a little bit and middle-class, and	6D174		6IN174		6V174		6P174	
175	I wondered if you could talk a little bit more about	6D175		6IN175		6V175		6P175	
176	that.	6D176		6IN176		6V176		6P176	
177		6D177		6IN177		6V177		6P177	
178	P6: Sure. In what way in particular?	6D178	QUESTIONING ME	6IN178	PARTICULAR?"	6V178		6P178	WANTING MORE SPECIFICITY
179		6D179		6IN179		6V179		6P179	
180	SS: Um, (1) in whatever way, I suppose, it relates to	6D180		6IN180		6V180		6P180	
181	your art school (1) choices and- and trajectory.	6D181		6IN181		6V181		6P181	
182		6D182		6IN182		6V182		6P182	
183	P6: Um, well, I think- (3) I mean, I- (2) I'm post-	6D183		6IN183	I'm POST-DAMIEN HIRST'	6V183	B: THERE IS PRE AND POST HIRSTIAN ART	6P183	HOLDING HIRST IN HIGH ESTEEM
184	Damien Hirst. And Damien Hirst grew up on a (1)	6D184	DAMIEN HIRST BACKGROUND	6IN184	DAMIEN HIRST GREW UP ON A COUNCIL ESTATE IN LEEDS'	6V184	B: HIRSTS STORY IS ENGAGING	6P184	TELLING HIRSTS STORY
185	council estate in Leeds.	6D185		6IN185		6V185		6P185	BEING INFLUENCED BY HIRST
186		6D186		6IN186		6V186		6P186	
187	SS: Yeah.	6D187		6IN187		6V187		6P187	
188		6D188		6IN188		6V188		6P188	
189	P6: You know, single mother.	6D189	DAMIEN HIRST SINGLE MOTHER	6IN189	YOU KNOW, SINGLE MOTHER'	6V189	B: HIRST STRUGGLED	6P189	EMPATHISING WITH HIRSTS STRUGGLE
190		6D190		6IN190		6V190		6P190	
191	SS: Mmm.	6D191		6IN191		6V191		6P191	
192		6D192		6IN192		6V192		6P192	
193	P6: So, even though I really don't like his work,	6D193	DISLKE FOR DAMIEN	6IN193	I REALLY DON'T LIKE HIS WORK'	6V193	B: HIRSTS WORK SUCKS, BUT HIS STORY IS POWERFUL	6P193	ASSERTING DIP6AIN FOR HIRSTS WORK
194	actually, as an example of (1) possibility, he was	6D194		6IN194	AS AN EXAMPLE OF POSSIBILITY, HE WAS INCREDIBLY USEFUL TO ME'	6V194	B: HIRST REPRESENTS POSSIBILITY	6P194	EQUATING HIRST WITH POSSIBILITY
195	incredibly useful to me.	6D195	WORKING CLASS HERO	6IN195		6V195		6P195	

Appendix 4: Sample of Typed Memos

Showing processes of conceptualising stemming from codes generated during the First Cycle Open Coding, highlighting some emerging themes being found in the data and insights utilised towards theoretical sampling.

ONLY BE AN ARTIST

This artist feels like their experience equipped them for nothing - only to be an artist. That's what they were told they were being trained for and that's what they believe. This is different to what P8 said about feeling like they could do anything at all upon leaving and art school equipping one with confidence. Could there be a trend that the more recent graduates feel they can do anything or could it be that the most confident people are picked during recruitment?

THE ONLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WAS NO STRUCTURE - LINKING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH NO STRUCTURE

This artist makes a link between structure of the course and professional development. They make the connection between no structure and the outcome of that being self-sufficiency and that being a legitimate aim of the course. I'm wondering whether this could be because they have a more managerial approach to things from their career in the arts.

HAVING A WAY OF THINKING - PROBABLY BEFORE I EVEN WENT TO ART SCHOOL - ARTISTS HAVE NATURAL TENDENCIES

This participant does what quite a few of the others have done which is to consider they didn't get any training from the art school that was at all useful, but by the end of the interview realising that they have engendered a 'way of thinking' from their art school experience, which is something that has had an affect on lots of their life's elements. This artist also alludes to the notion however that they most likely had this character trait/skill before they even went to art school, buying into the artist having a different mentality to others, which relates to the next point, which is that this artist also believes in the 'natural' ability of artists. They suggest most artists don't 'naturally' want to promote themselves, that it somehow against their nature to be involved in the promotion of the self. This also links to where they talk about be both creatively and logically minded, suggesting that mostly artists don't have logic - this insinuates the frequently held idea of right and left brain sided people. This artist seems to hold the belief in romantic notions of the artist, as an autonomous character with specific traits that they were most likely born with.

NEEDING TO BE WITH LIKEMINDED PEOPLE

This comes in briefly for this participant, as something they wanted to ensure after art school, that their work would be based in the arts so they could be close to artists and those who had a shared understanding of their world.

SO WE'RE TEACHING YOU TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT'
This was something that was explicitly told to the students at Art School X in the 2000s according to this participant. Self-sufficiency is inverted in this participants' account as it is normally the participant who thinks they are self-sufficient in the first place, however later this person does also go on to suggest they are also perhaps more of that kind of person in the first place (which is how a lot of the participants seem to see themselves), but they also acknowledge that their art school set out purposefully to do this, and it worked - they also related it to Professional Development too - GETTING ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WAS SELF-INITIATED

IT DIDN'T PREPARE ME AT ALL
This is a common theme coming up and one, which the participants seem to go through phases within the interview of realising and then realising further that they may have taken more intangible things from the art school.

ART SCHOOL LUCK NARRATIVE
The narrative that one has been 'lucky' has come up in many interviews so far. In this interview the artist tells how the brutal honest truth was given to them that in essence 'you'll be lucky if you make it' - while alleviating the art school of blame if things don't work out, it also means they don't feel they can 'do' anything to make things more likely to go well post art school? Perhaps this is why the notion of 'luck' comes up so much - because art schools explicitly feed art students the narrative of 'luck' and then genuinely equip them with nothing but a hope. If the narrative of LUCK that appears to be prevalent, and was in my own art school experience, is something that art students regularly experience, then it gives reason as to why many of them say they feel 'lucky' when they achieve something.

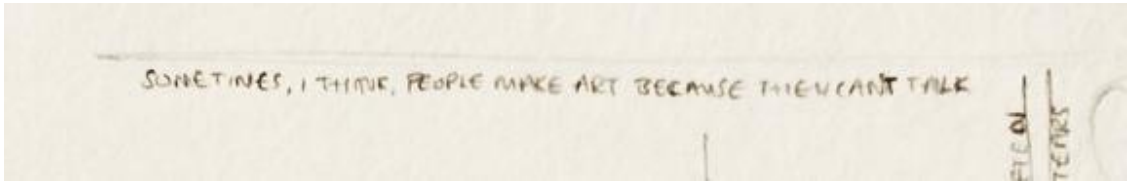
TOO YOUNG
Something that comes up frequently is age, and that some of these artists feel they were too young, or that they mention that they were young at art school and that youth has accounted for some of the problems they encountered. Perhaps there is a case for people waiting to go to art school for a while?

SOUNDING ROMANTIC - IT ALL SOUNDS REALLY ROMANTIC'
It seems like sounding romantic has become something to avoid or rather be aware of, in that a couple of artists now have noticed that what they are saying might sound like they are being romantic - could there be a conscious move away from romanticism developing? Has being 'romantic' become a dirty word and somehow devaluing?

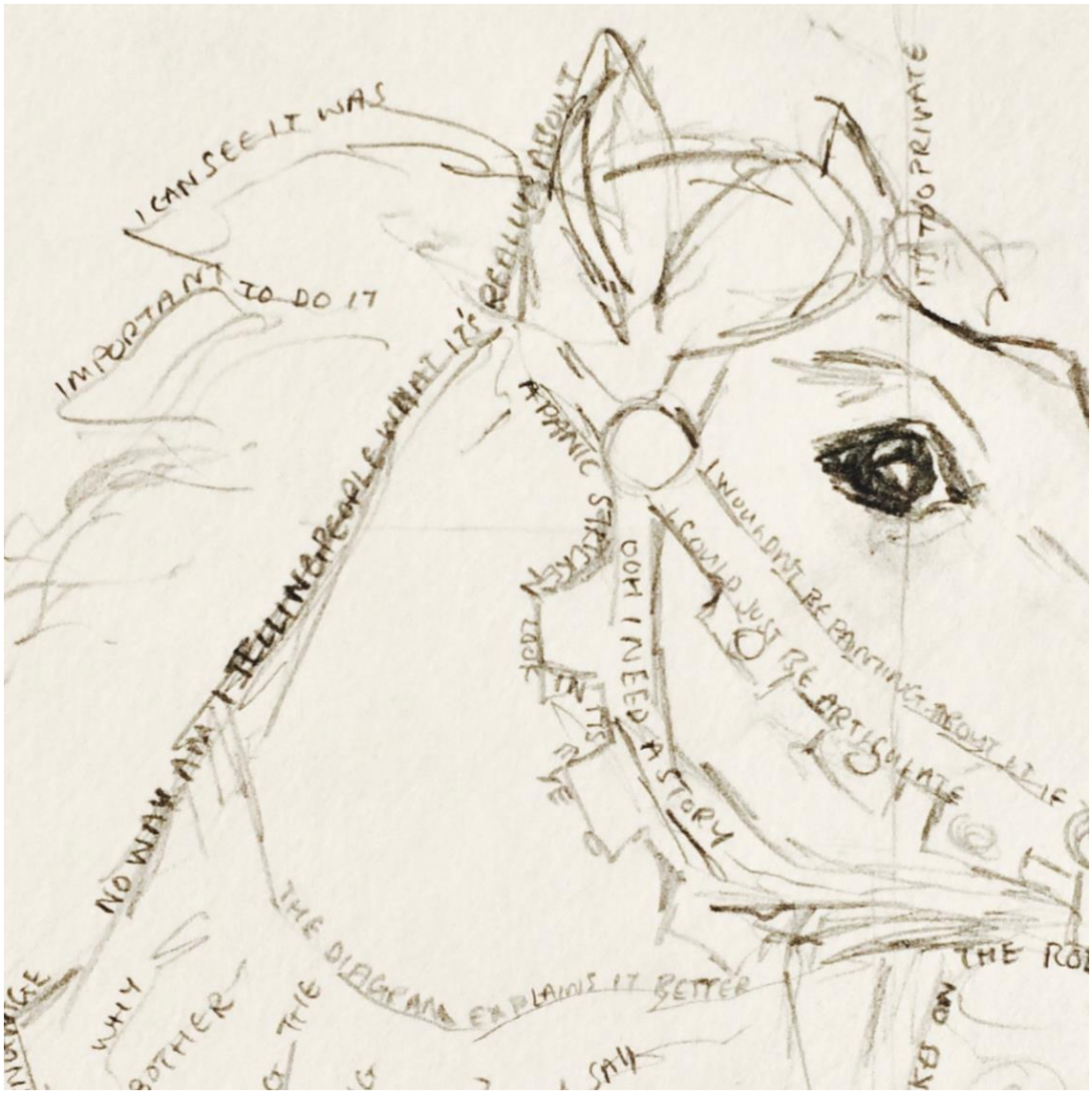
RECOVERY PERIOD
This is something, which is coming up as an emerging theme. It seems the artists I've spoken to have all needed time after art school to digest, and mostly recover from their time there. Certainly some of the graduates have needed 4 or 5 years to get over their deeply difficult and sometimes traumatic time there.

Appendix 5: Details of Figure 5: Drawing as AMM #1

Close ups of images with text comprising of the artists' words derived from In Vivo codes and my words related to the flashback given below.

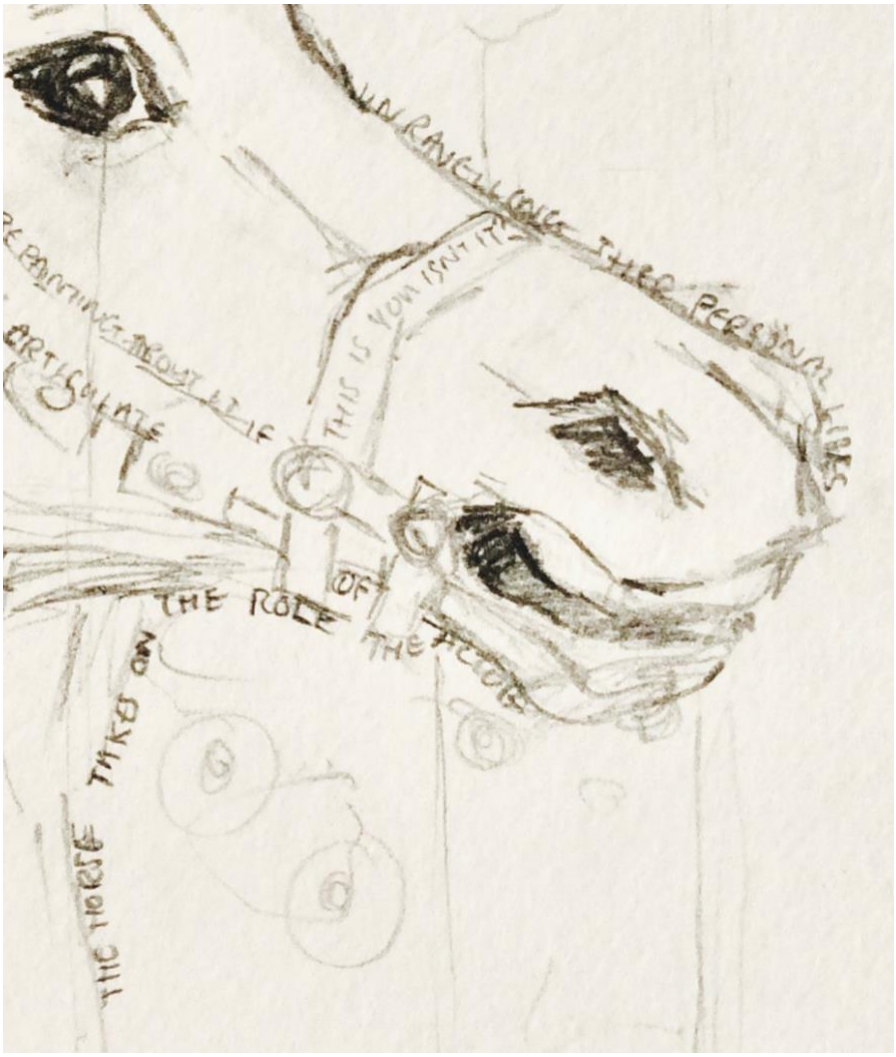


'SOMETIMES, I THINK, PEOPLE MAKE ART BECAUSE THEY CAN'T TALK'

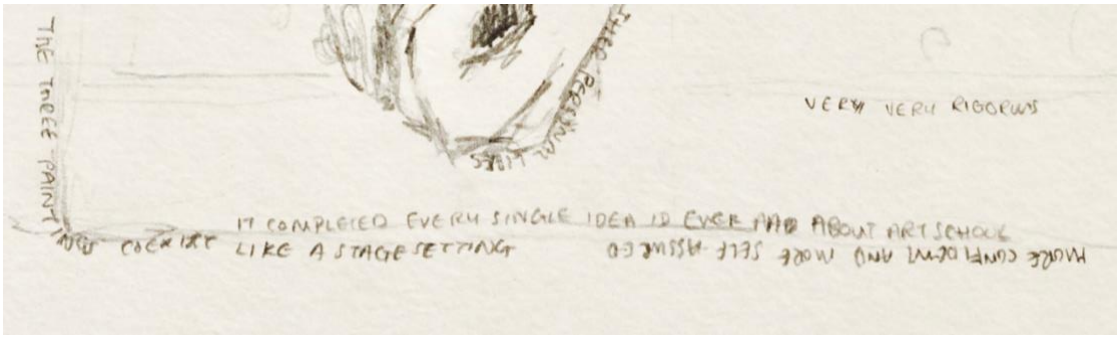


'NO WAY AM I TELLING PEOPLE WHAT IT'S REALLY ABOUT'
'I CAN SEE IT WAS IMPORTANT TO DO'
'A PANIC STRICKEN LOOK IN ITS EYE'
'I WOULDN'T BE PAINTING ABOUT IT IF I COULD JUST BE ARTICULATE'
'OOH I NEED A STORY'
'THE DIAGRAM EXPLAINS IT ALL'

Details of Figure 5. Drawing as AMM #1 continued



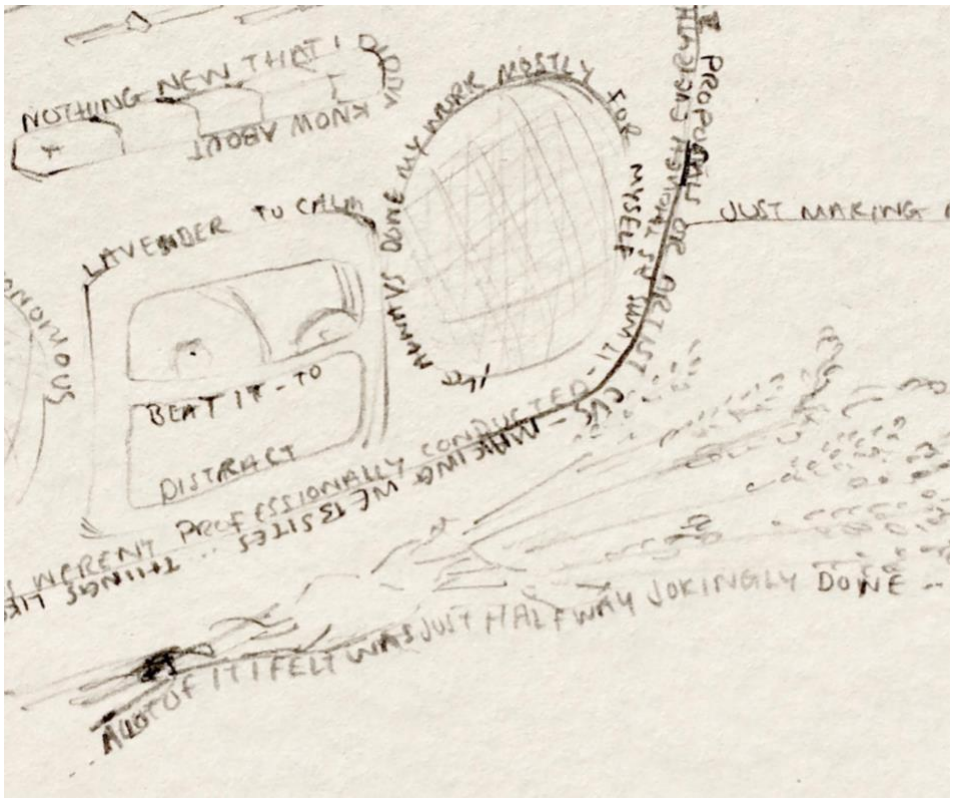
'THE HORSE TAKES ON THE ROLE OF THE ACTOR'
'THIS IS YOU ISN'T IT?'
'UNRAVELLING THEIR PERSONAL LIVES'



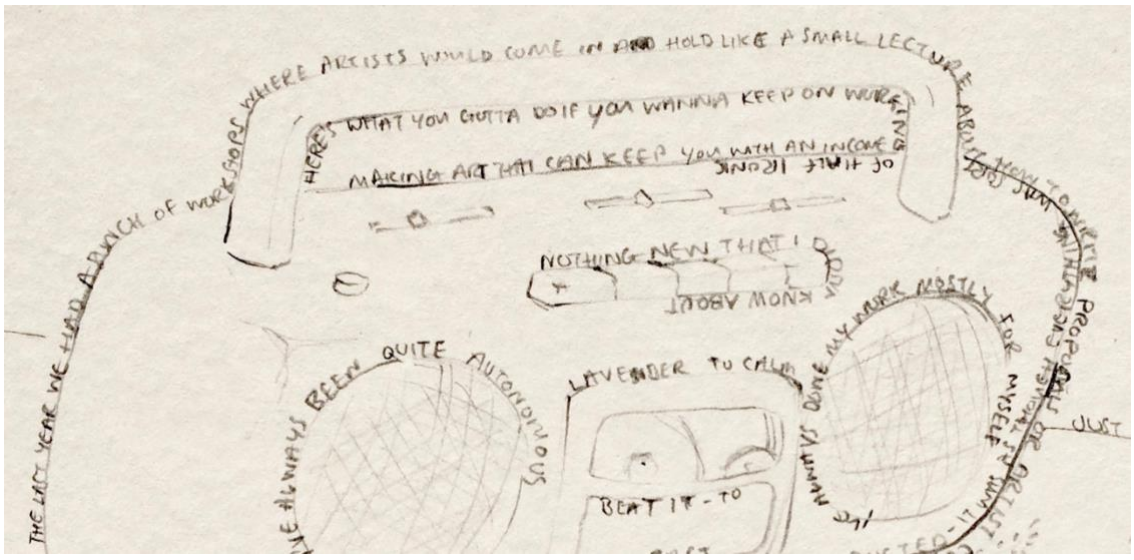
'THE THREE PAINTING COEXIST LIKE A STAGE SETTING'
'IT COMPLETED EVERY SINGLE IDEA I EVER HAD ABOUT ART SCHOOL
'MORE CONFIDENT AND MORE SELF-ASSURED'

Appendix 6: Details of Figure 6: Drawing as AMM #2

Close ups of images with text comprising of the artists' words derived from In Vivo codes and my words related to the flashback given below.

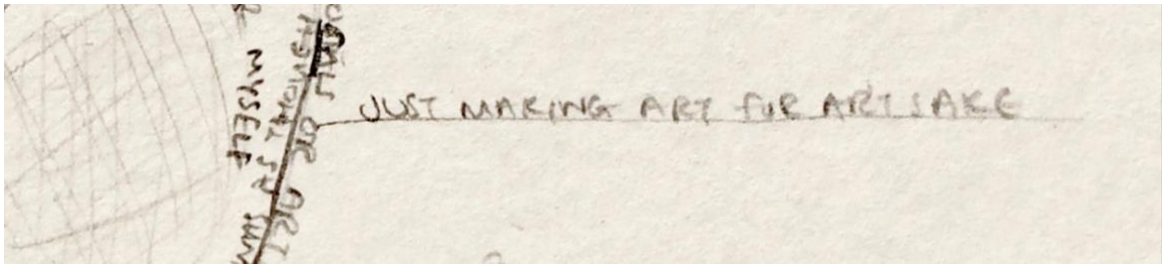


'LAVENDER TO CALM'
'BEAT IT - TO DISTRACT'
'A LOT OF IT I FELT WAS JUST HALF WAY JOKINGLY DONE'
'NOTHING NEW THAT I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT'
'I'VE ALWAYS DONE MY WORK MOSTLY FOR MYSELF'

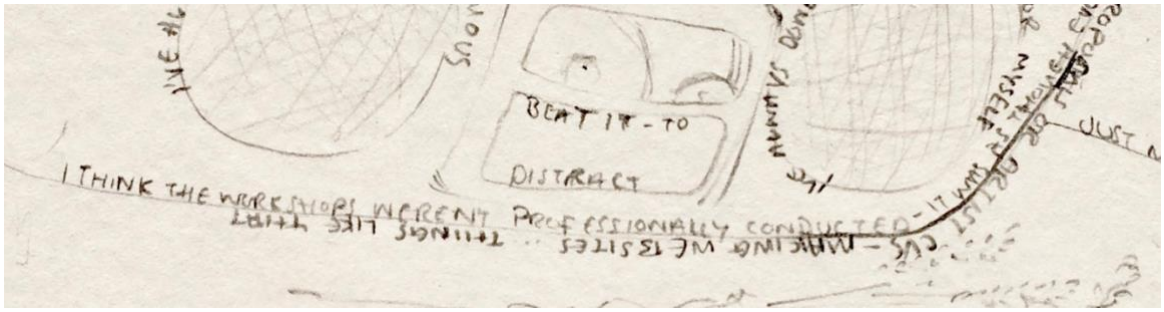


'THE LAST YEAR WE HAD LIKE A BUNCH OF WORKSHOPS WHERE ARTISTS WOULD COME IN AND HOLD LIKE A SMALL LECTURE ABOUT HOW TO WRITE PROPOSALS'
'HERE'S WHAT YOU GOTTA DO IF YOU WANNA KEEP ON MAKING'
'MAKING ART THAT CAN KEEP YOU WITH AN INCOME'

Details of Figure 6. Drawing as AMM #2 continued



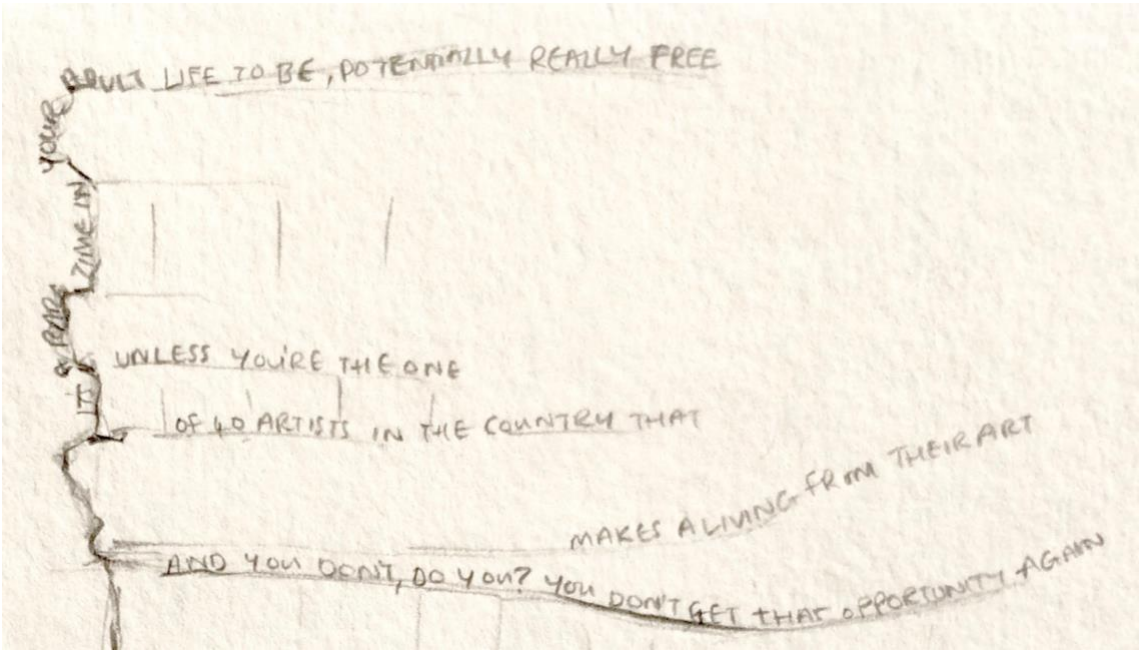
'JUST MAKING ART FOR ART SAKE'



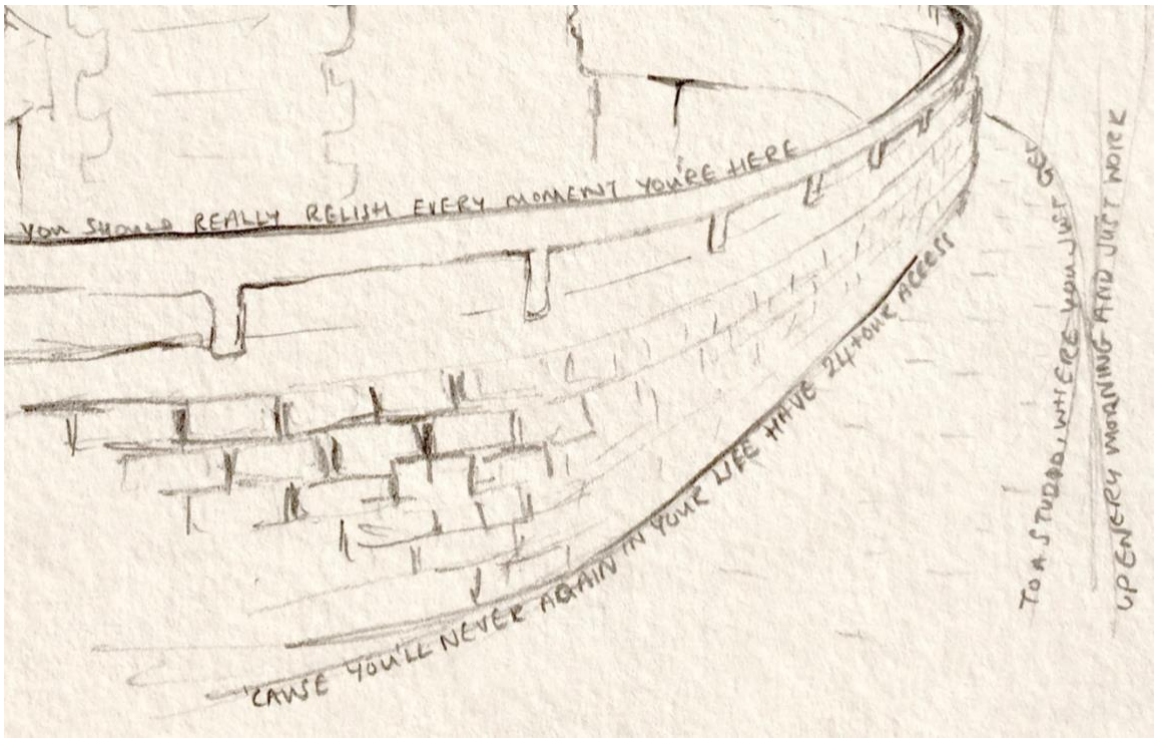
'I THINK THE WORKSHOPS WEREN'T PROFESSIONALLY CONDUCTED'

Appendix 7: Details of Figure 7: Drawing as AMM #3

Close ups of images with text comprising of the artists' words derived from In Vivo codes and my words related to the flashback given below.



'IT'S A RARE TIME IN YOUR ADULT LIFE TO BE, POTENTIALLY REALLY FREE'
'AND YOU DON'T DO YOU? YOU DON'T GET THAT OPPORTUNITY AGAIN'
'UNLESS YOU'RE THE ONE OF 40 ARTISTS IN THE COUNTRY THAT MAKES A LIVING FROM THEIR ART'



'YOU SHOULD REALLY RELISH EVERY MOMENT YOURE HERE, 'CAUSE YOU'LL NEVER AGAIN IN YOUR LIFE HAVE 24 HOUR ACCESS TO A STUDIO, WHERE YOU JUST GET UP EVERY MORNING AND JUST WORK'

Appendix 8: Sample of Data Ream used in the Second Cycle Axial Coding

Showing the condensed codes generated from the First Cycle Open Coding, collated into a single ream through a transitional process of Pattern Coding (detailed in the Methodology).
(IN= In Vivo Code, V=Values Code, P=Process Code)

2P896		RIDDING ONESELF OF THE MYTH
2V896		B: HAVING MONEY MEANS YOU NO LONGER FIT THE STARVING ARTIST STEREOTYPE AND CAN RID YOURSELF OF THE MYTH OF THE ARTIST
2IN896		RECEIVING THE SHCOLARSHIP WAS A BIG HELP'
2V894		B: THE ROMANTICISED VIEW OF ARTISTS SHOULD BE ESCAPED FROM
2V893		A: ARTISTS SHOULD NOT BE STIGMATISED
2IN893		I REALLY, REALLY HAVE CONSIOUSLY TRIED TO BREAK AWAY FROM'
2P894		BREAKING AWAY FROM THE MYTH
2P881		BEING INDUSTRIOUS
2V881		A: I CAN CREATE SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING
2V880		A: I CAN SURVIVE POVERTY
2IN881		SURVIVING, CREATING SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING'
2IN880		THE PRIDE THAT CAME WITH SURVIVING ON THE BRINK'
2IN879		THERE WAS AN ATMOSPHERE OF POVERTY'
2P880		TAKING PRIDE IN POVERTY
2P877		ANTICIPATING POVERTY
2V877		B: THE ART SCHOOL TAUGHT US TO EXPECT POVERTY
2		2
2V876		A: ART SCHOOL IS DIFFERENT, I'M DIFFERENT
2V875		B: I'M UNIQUE WITHIN MY FAMILY
2IN876		I DIDN'T GO TO UNIVERSITY, I WENT TO ART SCHOOL'
2P875		BEING THE ONLY ONE
2IN875		I WAS THE ONLY PERSON IN MY FAMILY BACKGROUND TO GO TO UNIVERSITY'
2D875		UNIQUE
2D874		BACKGROUND
2		2

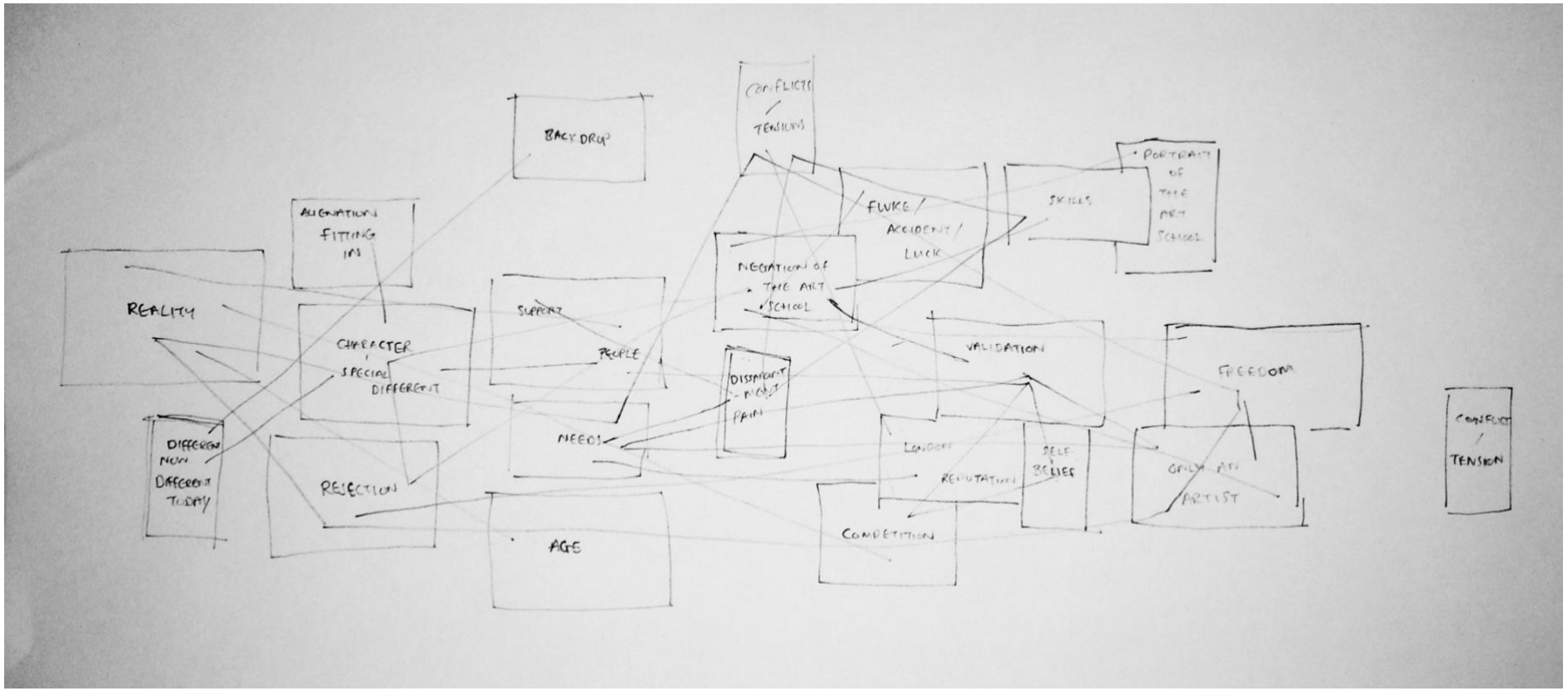
Appendix 9: Link to *The Coding Cave and the Performative Fishbowl* Film

The Coding Cave and the Performative Fishbowl
(Scarsbrook, 2018, 9:07 mins)

https://vimeo.com/271069224

Appendix 10: Enlargement of Figure 20: Diagram of Interconnectivity

Showing sketch of groupings and connections I made using twine and connective post-it notes in the Third Cycle Selective coding between the codes/categories developed in the Second Cycle Axial coding.



Appendix 11: Sample of *Finding the Findings* Coding

Showing the development of the core categories through theoretical sampling. This entailed sorting the findings from first drafts of chapters four, five, and six, and the analysis of these in chapter seven, and consolidating them under the headings of Identity, Myth, Freedom, Professionalisation, Tension, Emotion, and Motivation. The different colours represent where the findings were discussed as well as the theme.

Key:
Chapter four Chapter five Chapter six a Chapter seven Tension a Chapter seven Identity a Chapter seven Freedom
a Chapter seven Myth a Chapter seven Professionalisation

IDENTITY	MYTH	FREEDOM	PROFESSIONALISATION	TENSION	EMOTION	MOTIVATION
* Being motivated by their Always & Only identities and emotional attachment to these based on myths and beliefs	* Being motivated by their Always & Only identities and emotional attachment to these based on myths and beliefs	* Seeking London's cultural offerings related to the reputational value of the art schools and embedded mythologies of freedom London / art school can offer	*Asserting being chosen by the art schools they chose to choose them as a form of validation	* Art schooling causes lasting tension, conflict and contradiction in these art schooled artists' beliefs, identities, lives and careers	* Being motivated by their Always & Only identities and emotional attachment to these based on myths and beliefs (emotional attachment to A&O)	* Seeking London's cultural offerings related to the reputational value of the art schools and embedded mythologies of freedom London / art school can offer
*Asserting being chosen by the art schools they chose to choose them as a form of validation	* Seeking London's cultural offerings related to the reputational value of the art schools and embedded mythologies of freedom London / art school can offer	* Exhibiting Self-Determination through taking responsibility for and controlling / authoring their stories	*Asserting multiple modes of rejecting professional practice through forgetting/not acknowledging/not participating/poo-pooing/ridiculing/equating it with vulgar commodification/eschewing business skilling	* (London) Art School causes emotional distress for these artists throughout their careers - dissapointment is high because reputations / mythologised chances are promoted as higher	* Negating the Art School & Asserting Self-Ledness through rejections of having been *taught* and maintaining emotional attachment to belief in Always (and surrounding myths) (emotional attachment to A&O)	* Changing myths - looking for likemindedness/ gang/group going against image of the lone artist figure

IDENTITY	MYTH	FREEDOM	PROFESSIONALISATION	TENSION	EMOTION	MOTIVATION
* Changing myths - looking for likemindedness/ gang/group going against image of the lone artist figure	* Changing myths - looking for likemindedness/ gang/group going against image of the lone artist figure	* Absorbing skills to different extents (ASA) but seeking ownership over mode of learning through doing/making not *being taught/trained*	*Highlighting tension in experience of art school C/crit as both brutal and as rite of passage/earning badge of honour, notably missing from post-art school replications of C/crits - preservation of brutality as specialness of art school	* Much of art schooling is rejected (ie being taught), but its currency and value in validating and legitimating are preserved and drawn on in professional settings - this operates in conflict with myths that drive the artist's beliefs in always and only, and special and different identities	* Exhibiting Adaptability towards retaining Always - Adapting and accepting changing/lasping practice as ongoing activity post art school, letting go of emotional ties to work through culling, accepting pauses in practice, and, altering mode of working and output to constraints of work space and time available (emotional attachment to A&O)	* Tension grows from the complex relationship between supposed/actual freedoms experienced based in motivation, myth, pedagogies and choice - hence many assertions of freedom - self-determination/self-ledness/self-regulation - through the speech acts I identify
* Perpetuating myths through belief & promotion of the artist's 'luck', via art schooled myths & own beliefs in Always & Only	* Perpetuating myths through belief & promotion of the artist's 'luck', via art schooled myths & own beliefs in Always & Only	*Asserting multiple modes of rejecting professional practice through forgetting/not acknowledging/not participating/poo-pooing/ridiculing/equating it with vulgar commodification/eschewing business skilling	* Asserting awareness of impeding myths and wanting to change these myths (de/re-mythification), while also not noticing other influential myths such as luck/precarity	* Tension lies between artists' motivating, competing and compromising identities, the myths that shape them, and attending art school which contradicts these yet further entrenches both	* (London) Art School causes emotional distress for these artists throughout their careers - dissapointment is high because reputations / mythologised chances are promoted as higher	* Rejecting the title of professional, but using the currency of their art schooling in their careers as value in professional settings.
*Asserting multiple modes of rejecting professional practice through forgetting/not acknowledging/not participating/poo-pooing/ridiculing/equating it with vulgar commodification/eschewing business skilling	*Highlighting tension in experience of art school C/crit as both brutal and as rite of passage/earning badge of honour, notably missing from post-art school replications of C/crits - preservation of brutality as specialness of art school (S&D)	* Asserting Osmotically Learning and other self-led ways of learning through incidental means of finding/making/doing - outside of (perceived) art school curricula remits - (ie they think they are doing this outside of the boundaries of what was permitted in art school - self-regulated learning)	* Exhibiting Adaptability towards retaining Always - Adapting and accepting changing/lasping practice as ongoing activity post art school, letting go of emotional ties to work through culling, accepting pauses in practice, and, altering mode of working and output to constraints of work space and time available	* Art school potentiates and threatens artists' identities resulting in an underlying tension around if and how it validated or added value to their professional identities (drawing on currency for example)	* Artists exhibit/assert/perform multiple identities formed through art schooling, art schooled myth & art schooled emotional consequence, as well as their personal beliefs/emotional attachments	* Using interview as identity work - situating what art school did/could not do for them

IDENTITY	MYTH	FREEDOM	PROFESSIONALISATION	TENSION	EMOTION	MOTIVATION
*Highlighting tension in experience of art school C/crit as both brutal and as rite of passage/earning badge of honour, notably missing from post-art school replications of C/crits - preservation of brutality as specialness of art school	* Negating the Art School & Asserting Self-Ledness through rejections of having been *taught* and maintaining emotional attachment to belief in Always (and surrounding myths) (A&O)	*Experiencing tension due to anticipation of being able to 'only' and affordances of art school pedagogy of structurelessness	* Asserting characteristics that alter common mythic images of artists - being realistic/planning/asking for remuneration	* Artists relationship with the identities shaped through art school are important because they are motivating and impeding to different ends - shaping their continuum	* Professional Identities are formed of multiple oscillating, available, possible & impossible identifications - based on beliefs, myths (including art schooled ones), art schooling, values & emotional attachment - that are partial to the individual and adapted in different settings	* Tension lies between artists' motivating, competing and compromising identities, the myths that shape them, and attending art school which contradicts these yet further entrenches both
* Experiencing - marginalisation/alienation - highlighting androcentric/mysoginistic and homophilic tendency in London art schooling circa. 1986-2016.	* Asserting awareness of impeding myths and wanting to change these myths (de/re-mythification), while also not noticing other influential myths such as luck/precarity	* Experiencing - marginalisation/alienation - highlighting androcentric/mysoginistic and homophilic tendency in London art schooling circa. 1986-2016.	*Recovering & adapting identities, as well as holding on to parts of pedagogised identities - formulating post-pedagogised identities	* Artists awareness of and relationship with myth is complex - influenced by autonoetic consiousness and art school / the art institution / other artists - leaving them wanting to retain some myths (luck / precarity) and let go of others (romantic notions to be open about working conditions/hours and remuneration)	* Freedom-as-pedagogy offers no choice in how artist-students participate in art school pedagogies - highlighted in my study by how many suffer under this myopic/single-choice system	* Artists relationship with the identities shaped through art school are important because they are motivating and impeding to different ends - shaping their continuum
* Negating the Art School & Asserting Self-Ledness through rejections of having been *taught* and maintaining emotional attachment to belief in Always (and surrounding myths)	* Asserting characteristics that alter common mythic images of artists - being realistic/planning/asking for remuneration	* Negating the Art School & Asserting Self-Ledness through rejections of having been *taught* and maintaining emotional attachment to belief in Always (and surrounding myths)	* Much of art schooling is rejected (ie being taught), but its currency and value in validating and legitimating are preserved and drawn on in professional settings - this operates in conflict with myths that drive the beliefs in always and only, and special and different identities	* Freedom-as-pedagogy offers no choice in how artist-students participate in art school pedagogies - highlighted in my study by how many suffer under this myopic/single-choice system		*Artists are motivated to attend art school on the premise of being able to 'only' - shown to be unequally experienced - yet art schools continue to create this artifice that is related to mythic ideologies of artists and freedom through freedom-as-pedagogy/ structurelessness